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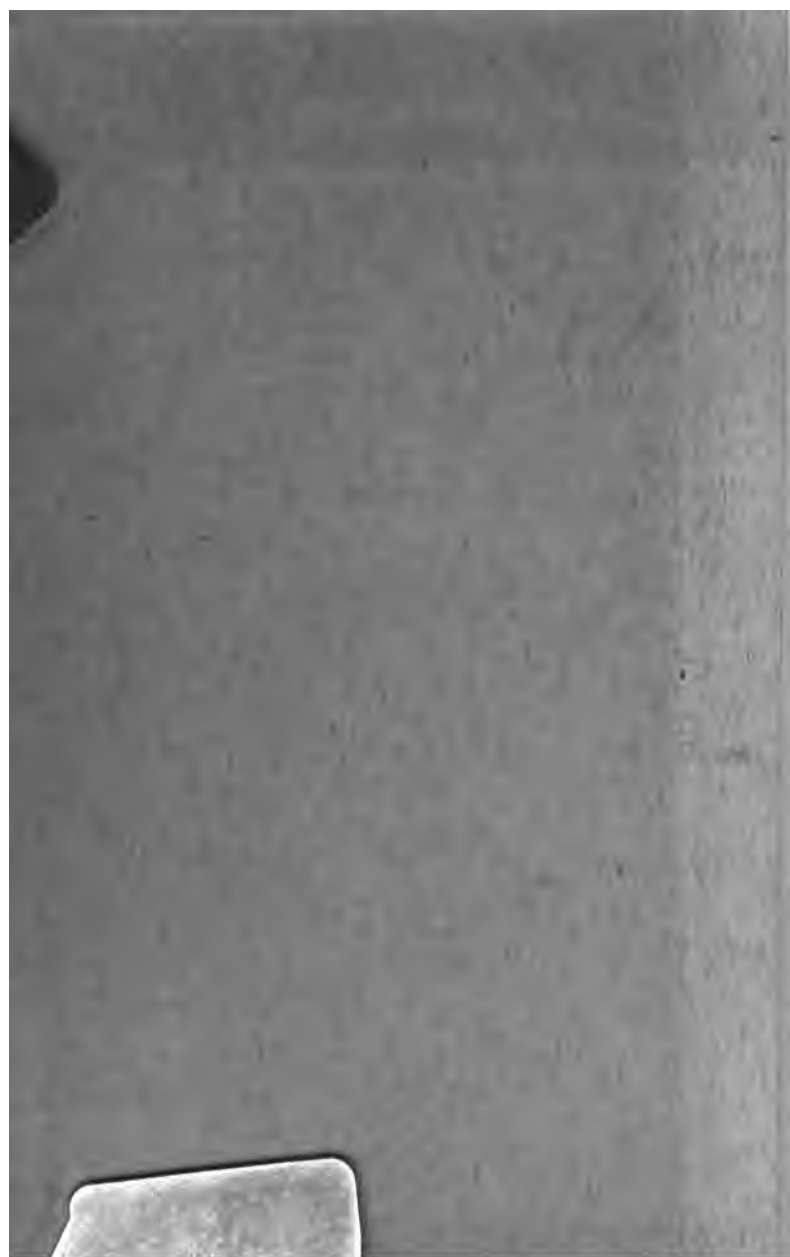
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THE GLORIOUS HOPE

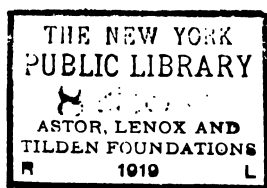
A NOVEL

BY

JANE BURR

Rose 1918

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CROTON-ON-HUDSON
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1918



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To
HORATIO GATES WINSLOW

CIVIL SERVICE PRINTING COMPANY
NEW YORK

THE GLORIOUS HOPE

CHAPTER I.

Evelyn Kerwin waved good-bye to "the crowd" at the little railway station and shook herself like a cat after a nap under the parlor stove. After all, she had been asleep, if not under, then, beside the parlor stove for some twenty-two years. Uh! How she hated that parlor stove with its red isinglass teeth eternally grinning at her and her dream. All the memories of her life were bound up somehow with that parlor stove. She had been bathed beside it, way, way long ago. She had learned her lessons, snuggled up to it all through her school life and from graduation day onward she had flirted across its grin with the various beaux of the village.

And now it was sold. Tony Crack, the Italian farmer, had purchased it. "Goody, goody, goody!" she murmured, "it's sold!" Then she smiled as she thought of all the little Cracks being bathed and tutored and courted in the glare of those half-friendly, half-sneering red teeth.

Only the tiniest little pull came at her throat as the train wound out of Port Illington. More out of fake sentimentality than any real emotion she wandered to the platform and watched her past come to a point and dwindle away.

"Well, that's over at last," she said, coming back to her seat and making herself comfortable for the journey. "There isn't a single thing in Port Illington that I want—thank all the gods, I'm through with it!" She folded her veil neatly and tucked it into her suit case. Her coat and


hat she covered with a cretonne bag (stitched up especially for the journey), then settling down comfortably against a pillow she drooped her eye-lids and watched the rivers of whiteness that billowed by on either side of the onrushing train.

Sometimes it seemed to her that the succession of mounds were little graves and she shuddered at the thought of how cold it must be under them. At other moments the bouncing hillocks were white hopes, all virgin pure without any mud spots of disappointment to tarnish them.

The farm houses hurried by sending out cozy little streamers of orange light, but Evelyn knew all about the loneliness that haunted the people on the home side of those little orange streamers, and her heart went out to them. Her heart went out to a farmer who spun by the window dangling a lantern from his freezing fingers. Her heart went out to the horses stumbling along uncertainly over the creaking road. She felt sorry for everything in the world that was tied down and couldn't get away. That meant that she felt sorry for everything but herself. She felt glad, very glad for herself.

There were various reasons why she should feel glad for herself. She was so glad that she began to sob a happy kind of sob that came from burying a crotchety old guardian and selling all her household goods, including the parlor stove with the red teeth for one thousand dollars and a railway ticket to New York.

Rupert Hughes says that for every five minutes of the day and night, one girl comes to New York to make her life. Nine-tenths of these little heroines are like Kedzie Thropp who had never seen Fifth Avenue or a yacht or a butler or a glass of champagne or the ocean or a person



of social importance, but if this is true, at least the other one-tenth are girls like Evelyn Kerwin, of good education and family. Girls who have most probably had a Cook's Tour Abroad. Girls who are by no means inexperienced or ordinary or poor. Girls who are somehow not satisfied to marry their first beaux and settle down to the monotony of life in a small town but whose hearts cry out for the chance to get somewhere and be somebody.

A modern psychologist has offered a theory that all young things should be pushed out of their homes at the age of eighteen; but so mistaken is the middle-class idea of duty that in reality one only escapes after the entire family is laid to everlasting rest in the village graveyard.

The girl in the train had waited four years past the scheduled time. During those four years she had twice been on the verge of an absurd marriage, but each time some of that glorious hope of youth—call it energy, love, passion—had whispered things about a great career, and the engagement was broken.

Now that she was free and rich in the possession of a thousand dollars, she looked straight in the direction of great careers and realized that hers would never come to Port Illington, Wisconsin, so being a modern and well-ordered young person, she packed her satchels and started out to meet it all the way.

Chicago is a place that one always likes to think of as having been visited, but New York is the pot of gold that lures one to the end of the rainbow. New York is an illusion that every energetic human has at the back of his brain. New York is the top o' the world! There is nothing after New York!

Evelyn knew the Chicago cobblestones by heart and

she begrudged the time it took to ride from one station to the other. She begrudged the slowness of the fastest train she could take to New York. She begrudged all the daytime because it dragged, but she loved the night because it brought the glory nearer.

At last the earth that had been wedding-caked with January snow in the far-lying country began to show a dusting of grime. The beautiful rivers of whiteness that billowed by on either side were scarred and spotted with black. Tin cans poked up; cast-off shoes, still with the shape of the last wearer's feet frozen into their stiffened selves, jiggled in a ditch as the train flew on toward the city.

"Poor, poor feet," thought Evelyn; "how I pity knotty feet and hands. How far those poor feet must have walked. How pitiful it is to work one's body out of shape."

She looked down at her neatly laced boots. How smooth they were. None of those hideous lumpy joints that spell drudgery and long hours. She felt sorry for those shoes in the ditch just as she had felt sorry for the lonely little farm houses a few hours before. She was so happy that she felt sorry for everything and everybody in the wide world but herself.

The New York crowds seemed pushier than the Chicago crowds. Uniformed men tried to grab her satchels. Boys jostled her. Women stepped on her toes. The mass of people swung up the iron stairs to the main floor of the Pennsylvania station and she swung with them. The back of her skirt kept working around somehow in front of her feet just on purpose to make her stumble. There was a squeeze in her throat and a panic in the pit of her

stomach. For the first time she was a little awed and frightened at her boldness in daring to come.

"I'm not the slightest bit afraid of anything!" she said to herself and, breathing deeply and throwing back her head, she mumbled something that she dimly remembered about "The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold, and his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold; and the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea, where the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee."

There was a conquering little turban of purple and gold on her head and she felt a very wolf indeed, coming valiantly down on the artistic fold of New York.

The second verse of the poem she had entirely forgotten—

"Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen;
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown."

Then the last triumphant line popped conveniently into her head—

"Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!"

The mere fact that she had unconsciously twisted the meaning to suit her own case, in no way disturbed her work-a-day mind.

Being far too clever to admit publicly that she felt equally mighty with the glance of the Lord, she saw no reason why she shouldn't think it just between herself. It gave her courage; it made her thrill with the thrill of "The Conquering Hero Comes!"

It was five o'clock and dark winter night. Thirty-

third Street was dingy in spite of its glare of electric lights.

Nothing is so compelling as the first sight of a strange city. One must stop and stare even if the penalty be the guillotine.

Evelyn looked up at a second story window on Seventh Avenue and watched a hunch-backed critter cover up her sewing machine for the night. Other women appeared out of the dark street doorways, stopped a moment for courage, then drawing themselves up tightly, rushed off and disappeared into the cold.

The little hunch-back came down and, without even a second's hesitation, opened the street door and walked straight away into the shadows, her thin coat unbuttoned and flying in the wind. Most probably she courted disaster.

Little droves of Jewish-looking men shuffled along, bent-shouldered in the melting snow.

Over across the street was a gay yellow restaurant, advertising a seventy-five-cent table d'hote on its painted front.

The girl waited for a break in the flow of vehicles, then crossed over and peeped through the window. It was all very gorgeous and glittery. People were swinging in through the revolving door and swinging out were faint whiffs of music and food.

Oh, for an invisible cap, that she might wander about looking into windows all night long!

"Alone Miss?" asked a sleek-looking gentleman.

This was so cheap to have happened to her. It was like a dime novel and she wasn't in the least interested in that type of literature. She wasn't afraid of him. She wasn't

afraid of anything, but, nevertheless, her body trembled and her heart thumped and over her hung the power of broad pavements, tall buildings, rushing motors, great cities—over her hung something that she had never glimpsed before—something bigger and more powerful than her own desires.

The uncertainty of things began to smother her. She clutched the handle of her brown suit-case with cramped vigor. Inside its darkness, among handkerchiefs and stockings and lingerie and blouses, nestled her letter of introduction to Anna Dickenson. Arguing that at least the road was friendly for *her*, she stepped up to an officer and enquired the way to Five-twenty East Fifty-seventh Street.

The policeman towered above her like the Charter Oak, extending two of his branches for her suit-cases, "Did you check your baggage, Miss"?

She beamed very charmingly and assured him that what he had in his hands, was her lock, stock and barrel and he must have thought her really nice because he left his post and walked way up to Thirty-fourth Street and put her on a cross-town car and told her to change to the Second Avenue and get off at Fifty-seventh and walk two blocks east.

And she *was nice* in a way and far above the average like brussels sprouts when you think of them in a world of cabbages.

CHAPTER II.

"Will you please tell me which way is up town"? she asked of an old chestnut man on Thirty-fourth Street and Second Avenue. After he told her she stood on the far side instead of the near side and the first five cars slid by haughtily before she discovered that the slight wasn't personal. But on the whole, Fifty-seventh Street was creditably reached if it wasn't creditably crossed.

That swarm of little human beings! Where in God's name did they come from? Whose were they? Surely no female in this quarter need view the guinea pig with envy.

She tried to escape stepping on them but invariably one was dodged only to collide with another.

"Aw lee me carry yuh baggage, Miss—fi' cents, Miss lee me carry it for fi' cents, Miss!"

She was on the verge of yielding when something about child-labor laws swam dizzily in her brain and clinched the decision that a young person was more in need of a back that wasn't broken than he was of five cents worth of all-day-suckers. And then they were such filthy children! Imagine living with one's suit case after the handle had got intimate with one of those germy little squirmers.

"No! No! Children!" she said determinedly, thereupon expecting them to fall away in Indian file to the side.

Had Evelyn Irene Kerwin known more concerning mob

psychology, she would surely have broken all the child-labor laws on the calendar and risked living with a septic suit case for the remainder of her natural days. How those cut-throats in miniature had loved her the moment before! Now shorn of that five cent possibility they tore at her coat tails, kicked at her satchels and shouted ridicule in her ears.

"Baggage man! Baggage man! Adams Express Company! Lady truck horse!"

She was deeply hurt. "This then is the reward of altruism," she murmured and as a sentimentalist walks over an ant hill she marched bravely on never looking back but hoping that not too many had been crushed in her passage.

It was so convincing to talk out loud. "Never mind," she said, "I wouldn't go back to Wisconsin for ten million dollars!" But inside at that very moment she wished miserably that her dead mother were rocking beside the old red-toothed stove so that she might crawl right under the well-remembered big white apron and cry her eyes out.

In New York, people always live in the last house and (when it's a *walk-up* and the mercury is trying to back out of the bottom end of the thermometer) on the top floor.

To Evelyn the big East Side tenement was like a seven story monster. The entrance was a huge open mouth that swallowed her suddenly and there she stood shivering at the bottom of a gray sky-topped well, with four winding outside stairways probably leading straight up to the golden streets of heaven.

The more she thought, the more frightened she became. She mightn't have been so brave about adventuring if it hadn't just so happened that old lady Pritchard had

had a friend, Carrie Dickenson, whose daughter, Anna, lived quietly at Five-twenty East Fifty-seventh Street in what they called the "Model Dwellings."

Of course Evelyn didn't know Anna—but then, after all, that didn't much matter because Anna's mother was Carrie and Carrie had known old lady Pritchard all her life and life to Evelyn was so bound up with old lady Pritchard that anybody recommended by her was sure to be highly respectable and at the same time to have a comfy feel about things.

She selected the stairway that included apartment fifty-nine and picking up her luggage began to ascend. She panted and clumb and clumb and panted for interminable centuries it seemed to her and still the card holders on the doors refused to divulge the homey old name of Anna Dickenson.

On the fifth landing Evelyn drew her skirts tightly about her and sat down on one of the suit cases to rest. She looked carefully about. It all seemed quite clean and nice to the naked eye but when one considers the microscopic secrets of a drop of ordinary ditch water, one can't be too careful.

Somebody shrieked. Heads popped out of the court windows. Folks grew neighborly in Italian, Bohemian, Scandinavian and Yiddish. It didn't at all matter that nobody was listening. Everybody wanted to talk.

Evelyn trembling violently pressed her hands over her ears. She knew there would be a pistol shot or a bomb. But she was new to the habits of the tenements. Nothing whatever happened. The heads all turtled back into their shells. Windows banged shut. Grabbing her suit cases she started up again.

She rose to the top floor like a swimmer and facing her was number fifty-nine but instead of the solid name of Anna Dickenson, there flamed this saucy crimson sign. MARJ PROUTY, and below in bold type, IF YOU ARE TIRED, SIT DOWN AND REST; IF YOU ARE VERY TIRED, COME IN AND HAVE A CUP OF TEA. NO CHARGES OF ANY SORT.

There beside the door was a lovely little chair of Chinese lacquer with a black satin seat embroidered in golden pagodas. Anybody might have flirted it away on the tip of his finger and yet it wasn't even fastened to the wall.

Evelyn's fingers were purplish and cold. She blew on them and stuffed them deep into her pockets, and then as she was *just* tired, she sat down on the little Chinese chair to rest.

CHAPTER III.

Evelyn stood up and read the sign again, MARJ PROUTY. IF YOU ARE TIRED, SIT DOWN AND REST; IF YOU ARE VERY TIRED, COME IN AND HAVE A CUP OF TEA. NO CHARGES OF ANY SORT.

It all sounded very sweet and generous but New York hadn't the reputation for being sweet and generous. Anyway Evelyn had read that dreadful report of the Chicago Vice Committee and having an accumulative brain she made a practice of pigeonholing what she read.

She had just about made up her mind to descend in search of the Y. W. C. A., when the door flew open and Chinese jingle bells made music in the air and a slim young girl in a transparent kimono flitted into the doorway.

"Are you just *tired* or *very tired*?" asked the young girl in the transparent kimono.

"Why I'm not particularly either, but I must say I'm a bit upset because I can't find the girl I had a letter to."

"Who'd you have a letter to?" asked the girl.

"A Miss Dickenson, Miss Anna Dickenson."

The young girl laughed and pushed her bobbed hair out of her eyes, "Short-waisted Anna! Bless her old religious heart. She used to exist here but she's gone over with a ship-load of Holy Bibles to put Christ on the Chinese map."

"Oh, is that so!" said Evelyn, because she actually didn't know what else to say with her mind racing around like a rat in a pantry trying to puzzle out this flat-chested little girl-woman.

There was no denying that Marj was pretty. Her body was thin and her face all ran to mouth, but a very jovial run it was that made Evelyn long to keep step.

Marj bowed low and spreading her arms out straight from her sides said, "I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight come within my tent and my servants shall bathe thy weary feet and thou shalt receive presents at my hand. In other words, you're alone in a wicked city, pick up your suit cases and come inside and I'll keep you company."

Marj sat Evelyn in a spreading willow chair and gave her a nice cup of lemony tea and three encouraging little shoulder pats.

"Now, don't you worry Miss What's-your-name from I-don't-know-where!"

And Evelyn all warmed up inside from the tea answered with mock severity, "Evelyn Irene Kerwin from Port Illington, Wisconsin."

"Whatche doin' so far from home?" asked Marj, flopping down on the floor in front of Evelyn and gathering a big bundle of black persian cat into her lap.

Evelyn reached out eagerly for her largest satchel and, burrowing around in it, came forth with a huge roll of paper. "Oh, I'm a writer," she said, excitedly, "short stories. You see I just got to be a regular orphan last week and I decided that the very best place for a writer to be in was New York, so here I am. I've only got a thousand dollars but I'll be making loads more before

that's gone. I am put out though because Mrs. Pritchard was sure that—Oh, you ought to know Mrs. Pritchard, she's the dearest old colonial thing that ever paddled around in hand knit stockings—well, she was positive Anna Dickenson would put me up till I found some place to live!"

Marj jumped and clapped her hands with delight. The black cat decidedly offended spilled out on the floor and sulked away. "Woman!" Marj screamed, clapping her hands again, "you talk faster and more incoherently even than I do! You're a real find!" and then she put on a sanctimonious face, "Anna was me friend; long-legged, virtuous Anna (why is it all good women have a bum shape); for the sake of her who is now heckling the pitiful Chinese I will put you up for the night—and tomorrow? well as Kipling and I would say, tomorrow is another day."

Marj began pulling out dresser drawers and dancing about the apartment, "Here's a bath towel and there's a face and behind that door is the tub; chuck your pack in the little room and if there's anything else you want, scream!"

Evelyn began to thrill with excitement. Marj was certainly different from anything she had ever seen at Port Illington or Madison or even Chicago. But then that was just why she had come away—to see things and people that were different from people and things at Port Illington or Madison or even Chicago. This was no ten-cent movie. This was real life!

In the tub she splashed and gurgled and thanked God for his wisdom in calling Anna to the heathen Chinese. Anna was probably Port Illington or worse but Marj

Prouty—why Marj was a million fiction stories a minute.

As a bath in a strange house leaves one a stranger no longer, Evelyn emerged flushed and reassured and Marj plucked at the damp curls that clung to her guest's forehead and pouted, "Lovely hair, mine stiff as picket fence; fall into your clothes now; party here tonight; fancy dress ball afterwards; spring you as my old college chum, Eve."

"You're awfully good to me," said Eve, "why I'm a perfect stranger to you."

"Stale stuff, kid. Great in the golden forties but won't go in New York now. You're fresh and new and I'm bored; that's the only reason on God's green footstool I'm taking you in. I want a thrill! My kingdom for a thrill!"

And then the girl-woman came close up to Eve and spoke tight-throatedly, "There isn't a day in the year that I don't drag in a weeping Wop or a Yid and water him with a cup of Orange Pekoe and let him talk his hands and feet off! Bored, bored! I do these things because I'm bored!"

"I thought," said Eve cautiously, "maybe you were a writer, too, and looking for atmosphere."

"Atmosphere!" shrieked Marj, twirling about on one foot and landing in a lump on the mulberry taffeta divan, "Atmosphere! Why there's more atmosphere in that Charles Dickens family of mine that I left back there in Texas than there is on the whole island of Manhattan!"

"I guess that's true about everybody's family," sighed Eve, undoing her hair and shaking it out into a large dark fan, "but the trouble is that one never suspects one's family of being interesting, one's time is so occupied with trying to escape."

"Spring is coming and this is no time for melancholy retrospect. Hurry Eve or they'll be here while you are still in your undershirt."

Eve flew into the little room and scrimmaged around in her once orderly satchels for a certain white chiffon blouse.

"Say, you hostess lady!" she called, "May I say Marj? Guess I'll have to if we're to be old college chums——"

"Say Marj, girl, what do you do as an excuse for living?"

"Oh, I'm an interior decorator person. Funny how you can get automobile trade over to the East Side if you have something new to offer them——"

"Heard about Eddie Goodman and the Washington Square Players? Bunch of writers and artists mad enough at Broadway to start an East Side Theatre of their own. Ought to see the Pierce Arrows crowding around that entrance. Half the mutts that paddle over there don't understand the plays but it's new. Hang it all, the world would break the whole ten commandments if you could show 'em a new way to do it."

Eve emerged buttoning up her blouse, "You know Marj, I really suspected you the moment I saw those blue-gray curtains and that orange taffeta frill on your white book shelf. I'm just blank on decoration. If I try to arrange a bath-room it simply laughs in my face."

"All bunk!" answered Marj, straightening a print of old Sôgi who had suddenly got tipsy in the breeze, "Absolutely all bunk. Never studied it in my life. Simply had to do something so I went to the library one afternoon and spent two solid hours learning how. More feeling in me for that than for *litrature*—notice how I

pronounce it. That's how they say it in Greenwich—oh, you'll have to know the Village."

"I want to know everything," said Eve, running her fingers over the big golden lamp-shade as though she had high hopes of coaxing some of the painted pea-cocks to strut off into her hands. "A big city is glorious. I thrilled all over when I came into Pennsylvania station. I'm thrilling now because you took me in. I'll never, never want to go West again."

"Don't be a fool, Eve Kerwin!" and Marj's voice was a bit thick, "you will want to go back—that's just the sad part of it."

Marj stood at the window with her eyes following a big mud-scow as it floated out toward the ocean on the oily gray river.

"You will want to go back," she repeated half to herself, "you'll cry big wet tears all over the page when you write to the girls at home and then some day when you can't stand it any longer you'll go." Marj turned suddenly with her little fists clenched tight, "And you won't fit!"

Suddenly they both had some of those big wet tears dripping inconveniently.

Marj spoke again, "Oh, it isn't that I want Texas any more. It's too little; too cramped; too set in its ideas, but way off here it's so big and unstable and so horribly all alone. Sometimes I get perfectly frantic for something to cling to—put on your belt!"

Eve walked dismally into the other room and fished out a belt. There was a silly black clock ticking its life away on a green painted chest and Eve grabbed it up and rushed out to Marj with it, "Oh, Marj, it's eight o'clock now!"

"Well, what's the uprising? Think folks dine at six prompt in New York like they do at Port Illington? Folks here—at least my kind of folks, dine when they get hungry."

Eve held onto the clock desperately, "Yes, I know, but you haven't even started anything going yet. What can I do?"

"Water the cretonne flowers on the bed-spread!"

CHAPTER IV.

And just then the Chinese bells jingled music again and Marj, kimono floating to the four winds, dashed over and flung wide her door.

It always seems 'a pity that conversation can't be superimposed in print and still mean something, like six voices speaking at one time:

"Hello Marj!"

"Hello!"

"Here's the eats!"

"Look what I brang!"

"Look what he brang!"

"Look what the Pij brang!"

Marj kissed each man as noncommittally as a Contessa Montessori might have welcomed her kindergarten babies. There was a youngness and large humaness about her that somehow took the curse off her gregarious, half clad little body.

Eve snatched 'a pearl brooch from her own bosom and stooping, nailed Marj's kimono together over her envelope chimese.

"You poor little provincial," purred Marj, patting Eve's head, "you remind me of something I had quite forgotten—my own body." Turning, she announced, "Boys, this is Eve, an old friend of mine!" Then, leaping to the center of the table, she waved her hands and barked, "This creature was caught in the wilds of Wisconsin by

"Well, what's the uprising? Think prompt in New York like they do at Folks here—at least my kind of folks, dirt-hungry."

I've held onto the clock desperately, "You haven't even started anything going yet."

"Water the crotonne flowers on the be

the desire to be one of us in New York! At present horribly tame and unmade but with promise of great possibilities in the near future—what am I bid? What am I bid?"

"Three pounds of chicken salad!" howled the Pigeon, dropping his donation to the supper at Marj's feet.

"Blessed old Pij," said Marj, doubling over and kissing his bald spot, "he always brings something expensive. He's the only man in the bunch with money and therefore the only man among us who is being done to a crisp all the time—but he loves it. Really, lads, this is Eve Kerwin. Eve, this is the Pij," and she pulled him forward in presentation.

He bowed low before Eve, "Welcome to the garden and may you find the serpent entertaining."

"This is Daffodil. See his lovely yellow curls? Being a boy and knowing he can't overcome it, we excuse him for not being a girl."

The Daffodil was a tall blue-eyed child who wrote verse and starved to death. He kissed Eve's finger-tips with affectionate and becoming melancholy.

"And this is Butts, the tight-wad!"

Butts' two arms were laden with packages and Eve thought Marj unjust and blushed rosily for Butts, but seeing that the balance of them, including the laden Butts himself, were howling at what they seemed to consider a family joke, she hastily put her sympathies back into reserve.

"Don't you believe them, Eve!" and Butts began to unload his packages right in the middle of the floor because he couldn't talk without his hands, "Don't you believe them Eve; they all say that but I'm eternally spend-

ing money on them, now ain't I? Speak the truth, children!"

"Sure you are and you're a dear old thing," said Marj, hopping down sparrowly and picking up bags and packages that began to look spilly, "but you're a tight-wad anyway, darling. Stinginess is a condition of the brain and not of the wallet. Wait till you're psychoed—you'll find out!"

Poor Butts pretending discomfiture at the accusations he had heard a million times, placed his hand over his diaphragm and bowed before Eve. "At your service, Miss."

"He talks like a jitney, Eve, but don't be afraid—he isn't!" said the Pij, and elated over his accidental witticism, authoritatively pushed Butts into the kitchen and commanded him to get the dishes down.

"And Eve," sighed the Pij, "let us present the Child. The sweetest, the youngest, the prettiest lad in the Village. We beg of you not to lead him astray."

He *was* astonishingly beautiful and Eve shuddered at the adjective in relation to a man. But he *was* beautiful. His face was sweet, finely modelled. For a moment as they stood there before each other Eve was in doubt as to whether she should shake his hand or offer him a lolly-pop.

Then the Child broke forth into deep manly laughter that contradicted his face and Eve straightway stuck out her hand and shook his vigorously.

"And this other being," said the Pij, "is Spinach the health fiend. He is famous for never having eaten a square meal in his life. But I will say this for him, he does eat a lettuce leaf every other week whether he's hungry or not." Spinach was at work on something stu-

pendously literary. Nobody knew what. It didn't much matter.

"I'm certainly very glad to meet you all." Eve spoke mechanically in her very best Port Illington to counteract which all the men excepting Spinach wheeled her around in a succession of kisses—some on the forehead, some on the nose, some on the chin.

Each place where the kisses fell, burnt and ached and somewhere inside of her she was horribly hurt and weepy.

But she didn't weep because then she couldn't see. She felt that she was primarily a story writer and secondarily a human being and the human part of her submitted for the sake of local color.

"Did it ever occur to you fellows to use a little discrimination!" snapped Spinach, "Perhaps Eve doesn't want to be kissed!"

"Oh, you old potato blight!" cried the Pij, planting a smack straight on Eve's neck, "now she's a member!"

And luckily just here Marj began to order the crew about the place. "Here, Eve, lift up that side of the table, and you, Daffodil, spraddle out the legs and let's get busy. We've got millions of things to do before we go to the ball."

Little Japanese dishes flew down from the shelves and big Canton bowls received mountains of salad and layers of bread and cake. The coffee in the copper thing began to perk and everybody sat down and scraped up to the table.

"Whatche gone wear, Marj?" asked Butts, the tightwad, filling his plate full of large portions, particularly of everything that he had brought to the feast.

"Oh, I've got a million yards of white net that I'll drape

over a silk comby and then I'll wrap that tinsel cloth around my head—but Eve! What shall we do Eve in? She's got to be somehow lovely!"

"Leave her to me. Eat first. Gimme the sardines," said the Child.

The poetic Daffodil helped himself to a fourth of a pound of butter and taking Marj's spoon unto himself, sang out, "Why don't they ever have spoons enough! By the way, did you see F. P. A.'s Column this morning? No—well, Berton Braley's lost his dawg, Solomon, again—gee, the coffee's perking over!" and the poetic Daffodil whose mind was always on food because his stomach was habitually empty, flew to the side table and turned down the flame under the angry brown fluid.


"My Gawd, look at the butter Daffy takes!" This from Butts, the tight-wad, and his tones registered deepest distress. He had bought the butter and while he didn't mind so much paying for it, he couldn't bear to have it eaten.

"Bring on the dee-sert!" shouted the Child and they all joined in the chorus, knocking their knife ends urgently on Marj's mahogany table, "Dee-sert, Dee-sert, bring on the Dee-sert!"

Marj adored sweets. She actually squirmed when Daffy handed her an eclair.

"Oh, damnable old French pastry!" wailed the Child, "who brought the French pastry? Who brought it, I say? It's made out of sea sand!" and he stood up menacingly with his fork in his hand.

Butts popped to his feet, "I bought it and it came from Cushman's and Cushman's is expensive. You haven't even tasted it yet, you kicker!"



"Well, it looks rotten," said the Child, stuffing a Napoleon into his mouth.

"Pass it on, pass it on!" somebody demanded, and they all began to grab at the big golden bowl.

"Stop!" shouted Marj, "you'll smear up all my interior decorations!"

Butts burst into a thunder-clap of laughter.

"Oh, I don't mean what you mean, smarty!" sneered Marj.

They pushed back their chairs and began to clear the table. Butts washed and the Pij dried and in ten minutes there wasn't a crumb to show which way the babes in the woods had gone.

"Got any silk bloomers, Eve?" asked the Child, and Eve jumped as though a dum-dum had landed in her solar plexus.

"Why, yes—I have—I—"

"Well, haul 'em out and let's see what we can make you up as."

The Daffodil stood her on her feet and began to unhook her waist.

"Stop, you silly!" and Eve jerked away from his hands slapping them hard.

"Well then, Miss Prissy Prunes Prisms, hurry up a bit, we haven't got all night. And right here I'd like to say that you aren't on to this gang at all. You never met a cleaner bunch in your life. You don't dope us out right, Mrs. Comstock—it's just family stuff, that's all," then the Daffodil turned to the others, "encourage her lads, she thinks the next degree is stepping on hot nails!"

"I'm not so—afraid," pouted Eve, "don't you believe him. I understand perfectly."

Eve really was beginning to feel more like one of them though she wasn't quite sure about Marj. Marj certainly was a problem. She didn't act like a good girl and still she didn't act like the bad ones in the best literature. Oh, well, what was the use worrying. If she took care of her own morals that was a big enough job.

"Take off your waist, Eve, and let's see if we can drape this Turkish thing around you and make you look like the old Pasha's favorite!"

The Pij held up an exquisite shawl, but Eve didn't budge.

"Take it off, Eve," he coaxed, and then he added furiously, "for Gawd sake, take it off—O-F-F, these men have seen more necks and shoulders than Ziegfeld!"

"Well, I'd rather take it off in my own room!" and suddenly Eve felt very hot and shrivelled.

"She's a long, long way from Tipperrary, boys," said the Child with an ugly grimace and Butts added, "Aw, let 'er alone, she'll get there."

Nevertheless Eve took her waist off in the other room and half draped the scarf before she returned and then Butts finished it.

Butts was a fanatic on color schemes. He could rave at a window for a whole day just about the people that massed and scattered themselves on the street below.

"Look, folks, she's wonderful. Gimme that lip-stick. I want her face pale and her eye-lashes black and her lips like fire. Marj, gimme that green velvet for a band around her forehead. Where's that gold tassel I left here last time—gimme! Hurry! Look, folks, she's wonderful. Ain't she awful pretty!"

Eve was thrilled. Folks at Port Illington certainly

were dead ones. These people knew how to find happiness. This was life. It must be life. It *was* life.

"Drop your skirt now and put the bloomers on. Oh, in the other room, Miss Purity League!" and they all rushed her through the door and pretended to lock it against themselves.

Eve viewed herself in the mirror. She really was beautiful. She came out in a moment with her eyes seeing things. Great broad sparkling worlds. Great worlds where she at least had not left her visiting card.

Through all this excitement Spinach sat placidly at a window jotting down what he called big ideas in a little book. He looked up now and muttered to himself, "She is beautiful."

Nobody breathed for a full second and then Butts, the connoisseur, broke into rhapsodies: "Ain't she got pretty legs? She's just plump enough. She's sweet as punkins." He turned his head this way and that way to get a variety of viewpoints. "Tie the other scarf around her hips and bring it down into a knot in front—sure, let the two ends flow. Gee, she's great!"

Marj patted Eve on the shoulder, "You're a credit to me, Eve!" and Eve felt soothed inside and very pleased.

Then the men began to rig themselves up. Butts was a Turk. A very bare-fronted Turk with his robes open down to his navel. There never had been a single hair on his chest and it pleased him enormously. He never tired of calling attention to the fact and he simply adored showing his navel. He tinted his flesh with fuller's earth and wound a great yellow turban about his head. The effect of him standing before the mirror with Eve was startling.

The Child rolled up his B. V. D.'s and wound a leap-

ard's skin around his trunk, dismissed his socks for the evening and slipped his bare feet into sandals. Finally, he ran a comb up through his Byronic hair and stood there a perfect little god.

The Daffodil was a cassocked Christ and the Pij was Pierro. Pij was unfailingly Pierro. That's as far as his imagination worked and Spinach at the last moment pulled a black domino out of his pocket and stumbled into it.

All of them in a more or less joyous state of undress mashed into one taxi at midnight and rolled away to the artists' ball.

Music and boisterousness flooded out to them at the entrance of the hall and Eve colorful and thrilled with the Daffodil tugging at her left hand and the Child at her right, rushed valiantly into that sparkling new world to leave her visiting card.

CHAPTER V.

At one end of the ball-room a black and white pantomime was spending itself on a toy stage. At the other end the drunken music-makers were pounding out a syn-copated frenzy. The balcony all around was draped with limpy arms and painted faces riveted on the floor below where all the madness of all the witchcraft of all the ages was rocking itself in a delirium of dance.

Eve saw nothing but the color; felt nothing but the motion. In the arms of Daffodil she floated round and round the great hall in a passionate realization of all the Arabian Nights rolled into one.

When the music stopped she looked so new, so fresh with her whole being out of breath from laughter and dancing, that a clot of men primed for adventure swooped down and wrenched her from her cassocked Christ.

She ducked and swerved and fought. Her temper rose until she saw the whole universe as one horrid painted lip.

Marj galloped up. Her eyes were already veiled with alcoholic distances, "Oh, go on and kiss him Eve—don't be a silly!"

Eve struggled and clawed.

"My God, she's serious!" shouted one of the men, letting go Eve's arm and pulling his accomplice off.

She shot free and made for the balcony upstairs. She was hot and shivery at the same time. She felt hurt and

ashamed and she wanted to go home. Those men weren't playing fair—they were—well, they were just not nice.

To Eve a kiss was such a sweet sort of sacred thing. She would have liked saving all hers for—well, for somebody she might someday love.

She shouldn't have permitted those boys up in Marj's apartment to kiss her that way either, even if they were just funning—kisses were not the way to fun. She felt unconsciously for her skirt. It was gone. Then, with a shock, she remembered she hadn't worn one. Her silk-stockinged legs made her ashamed. After all she hadn't come to New York to make a fool of herself. She had come to New York to make a great person of herself.

And then, as though an alarm clock had gone off in her brain, she rubbed her eyes and examined the crowd around her and below her.

Where was all the beauty that she had seen when she entered the place? Now, there wasn't any beauty anywhere! The costumes were soiled and the people were sweaty and the music—oh, the music was still beautiful if she didn't look at the drunken musicians.

She wanted to run. Anywhere, so long as it was away from this human menagerie got loose from the keepers of common sense.

A rattle of laughter came up from the people directly below her. Eve looked down and there was Marj kissing the kissless gentleman and kicking the chair bottoms through to punctuate her pleasure.

The little circle applauded so she stepped from chair to chair kicking all the bottoms through, springing at last on the Pij's shoulder and shrieking for another drink.

He piloted her through the ball-room and up the stairs

to the little box where Eve was sitting alone. Spinach scowling at Marj deposited two lemonades on the table and then unbuttoned his domino at the throat and dropped it to the floor.

The Pij placed Marj's little feet in the center of the table among the lemonades.

Spinach shook his finger at her, "Get off that table and sit down here I want to talk seriously with you. You've had enough to drink!" That was Spinach's way of starting a lecture.

"Oh, come out of that forty year's grouch and take a real drink yourself—it won't do you nothing!" chirped Marj in sticcato soprano.

"I don't want what you call a real drink and you know it. If you don't quit you'll die in the T. B. ward of a free hospital!"

There was a momentary quiver in Marj's little body and then a gloomy stilling. Most likely something was passing by in her brain—a cheap funeral perhaps—who knows. Then to shut out whatever it was she banged on the table and shouted for another Haig and Haig.

Eve squeezed around between the chairs and the railing of the crowded place and sat down beside Marj.

"Marj dear," she whispered, "please don't drink any more. You'll kill yourself.

Marj gave Eve a clumsy push, "You're nice, Eve, but you're a hymnal. I hate hymns. I hate churches. I hate preachers. I hate everything I had when I was young. Waiter, break the speed limit and gimme that high-ball!"

She turned back to Eve with a sneer, "You poor simp you're having an H of a time here tonight because you

won't drink. You've got to drink at a place like this to keep from killing yourself. You look like a D fool with a fancy costume on, drinking a lemonade at one A. M. For God sake and your own sake, Spinach, take her to early mass and good riddance!"

"Marj, dear, you don't know what you're saying. Please don't take anything more to drink."

Marj swallowed her mug of joy with one gulp, jumped to the table again, then to the railing that ran around the box and fluttering and piping like a silly sparrow, flew off down the steps into the wriggling, writhing, half-mad lunatics on the floor below.

"She'll commit suicide some day," muttered Spinach.

Eve didn't hear him. Her eyes were following Marj as she skimmed over the black boards.

Marj's toes were always in the air—dainty sparrow. Her thin little child's body fluttered and lifted and flew from the arms of one red faced gentleman to another. It seemed to Eve that Marj didn't in the least object to the sweat and grease paint that dripped from hideous faces to her bare chest.

It must have been the passionate rhythm that drew the curtain across trivialities and sent the madness surging through her quivering bones.

If only the music had kept on forever, she might have kept on forever, dancing, dancing after all the world had dropped to the ground. Even then she might have lighted on their dead bodies and danced herself off into eternity alone.

Well, at least that wasn't what Eve had come to New York for. She had come to make herself the greatest

American novelist and that goal, she knew wasn't reached by the liquor trail.

Why were people so idiotic? What was the sense in losing one's head and dying of regret afterwards?

Eve believed in self-analysis; in folk analysis; in world analysis. After everything was analyzed down to the very last detail, then if one cared to lose one's head in cold blood, Eve saw no adequate reason why one shouldn't.

Already she felt deeply unhappy. The beautiful fun that she had discovered to be real life during the first half of the evening, had turned out to be fakier than "Minnie the Wild Girl" in Barnum's circus.

There was no earthly use in advising Marj. She wasn't the sort that could take it. The only thing that one could possibly do was to stand around in the shadow so as to be ready to pick her up when she fell.

Eve wanted to run. She wanted to run to some place where human beings were serious minded like herself. Her career was so important to her. Well, tomorrow sometime, she would bank her thousand dollars, rent the cheapest tenement she could find, and make a start. For the rest of the night—well, the night was nearly over.

Suddenly the music stopped and a man on the toy stage shouted, "Clear the floor for exhibitions! Prizes will be awarded from this platform!"

The dancers fell away to the sides and sank down on the floor. Tired heads fell on sweating shoulders and aching lips kissed aching lips—it didn't much matter whose. The sun and the world were up for the day but in the curtained ball-room belief in the night still lingered.

Dimly first and then ascending to an aching rhythm

rose the music and from a small opening in the human tangle on the floor, burst Marj in the arms of a black and white shepherd.

Eve looked closely at the man. He was lithe and dark as though all the suns of all the tropics had burnt their moods into his cheeks. As a matter of fact Marj had said that he was scarcely on speaking terms with the daylight. He held an office job in one of New York's deepest and blackest buildings and all day long his mind dozed while his fingers wrote things in a ledger.

At costume balls he always dressed as a shepherd. His mind ran so to goats and shepherding that he had written and produced the pantomime of the earlier evening.

Everywhere he was known as the Shepherd and Marj was to be his Shepherdess. Marj was an acolyte of free love but not so the Shepherd. The Shepherd believed in the old-fashioned ceremony from which one may emerge legally pardoned, and still retain the whiteness of the lily.

Perhaps the Shepherd had seen too many Greenwich Villagers living in a perfect agony of free love because they could not, for principle's sake, break away.

Marj looked into the Shepherd's eyes. The Shepherd looked into Marj's. They tilted a moment and then like two eerie things of white and silver cloud, swayed into the swinging rhythm of the music.

They dipped; they floated; they rocked; they poised. Their bodies clung and tore apart and melted together again. There wasn't a sound in that over-crowded arena but the pulsing rhythm of the music. Then as a ship flies her signal, the Shepherd twirled Marj about and catching

her under the arm-pits, raised her fluttering before him and sailed away into the outer darkness.

For one second there was breathless silence. Then shouts! Then screams! Then a mad thunder for more! The people applauded and banged their heels on the hard floors. Women cried and laughed and screeched. Suddenly an electrical message darted about the hall—the girl had fainted. Very few knew her and certainly nobody cared. The little channel through which the two had disappeared swam together again and from the opposite corner of the circle tripped Pierro and Pierrette. Marj and the Shepherd were forgotten. The befuddled crowd lolled back baring its emotions to be played upon again.

Eve fled down the steps and pushed right and left through the mob. That moment had already arrived when Marj, crumpled in a heap, was waiting to be picked up by her friends.

Eve and the Shepherd lifted her in their arms and carried her out to a taxi.

It was cold winter daylight and Marj looked ghastly as the resurrection. The Shepherd crawled in carefully and lifted the ragged little figure to the seat.

Eve, tired and perplexed by so much that was new, made herself small and quiet on the floor of the machine.

Poor little beaten Marj. She crushed herself up close to the Shepherd and shut her eyes as though there were but one safe place in all the world and that one just where she lay.

Back in the apartment, Eve undressed Marj and pulled down the black shades to crowd out the day.

As she stood there looking down on that exhausted little body, a whole troop of household gods, like peace and har-

mony and ignorance, packed up their effects and moved away forever from that warm Port Illington spot in her brain.

All day as she tiptoed in and out she wondered why people did such things to themselves. Everywhere was the great and glorious world waiting to be conquered but the Marjs would never do it—they were too busy wasting themselves.

She sat in a big rocker and played solitaire with her own plans. It came out right every time. What could be simpler? Anybody could do anything he really wanted to do. Wasn't it Ibsen who said that genius was situated in the seat of the trousers? Just a little will to work—that was all. Everything else, out of sheer awkwardness, fell directly into line.

She rocked quietly. All the world was just a great big old docile doggie waiting to lick one's hand. It just looked black and ferocious, but anybody could master it. All its barking counted not even as much as the rivers of dark that waited outside one's house at night. Barking was most probably its way of being affectionate.

Accidents? Well, of course, there were accidents. People did get smashed up in train wrecks and fall headlong out of aeroplanes, but after all a clever person could be pretty well master—even of accidents.

Home-made wrecks like Marj were spraddled all over the underworld and in Potter's Field. Poor little Marj, with a lot of riotous ancestors crowding down on her like a log-jam. Why did she permit it? A good lumberman would have extricated that one log that was making all the trouble. It was so simple to the Eve type of mind. Marj should simply have refused to drink and then the

whole flow of her life would automatically have been released in accompaniment to her own will.

Eve moved up closer to the radiator. It was dreadfully cold.

She wished now that she had talked with Spinach about all these intricacies. When he wasn't haranguing on the nutritive quality of nuts and figs he seemed to know a lot of interesting things.

But Spinach was gone and the Shepherd was gone and she was alone and sleepy and Marj looked as though she were dead and that fact turned Eve from philosophy to motherliness and from the misery of human tangles to homelier problems.

She got up and heated another iron for Marj's stone-cold feet and made a fresh ice-pack for her burning forehead.

CHAPTER VI.

All Provincials banish—malign perhaps with secret envy, the word Bohemianism. To them it pictures the evil of late hours, alcohol, freedom!

But there are two sorts of Bohemianism in every large city. In New York, the Bohemianism of Forty-second Street with its burnished cafés, its shifty-eyed actors and actresses, its dope-fiends, its millionaires, its hall-room boys; and the Bohemianism of Greenwich Village with its bare boards, its paper napkins, its empty pockets, its hallowed dreams for the remaking of the commonwealth.

It was into this serious-minded Bohemia that Spinach the health-fiend piloted Eve on the night after the ball.

The little restaurant was in the basement of an old brownstone front in Tenth Street. Down on the sidewalk were bouquets of Italian children swaying to the latest tune of a hurdy gurdy. The aching cold of January had relented and the ragged nymphs danced their prophesy of another Spring.

The dingy windows of the great house looked ominous and Eve held back close to the children.

Spinach grew irritable. "Please come on. We'll miss everybody that's worth while. You'll see this performance ten million times when the hot weather comes!"

But Eve stood near the curb and answered him sharply without turning, "I don't care how often I see it again, it won't be this time. I've got one idea about life—hug a joy as long as possible!" and then sighing deeply as

though the very mention of joy's name had frightened it away, she followed down the steps through an unlighted passage to a big sandy-looking room at the back.

"You see, Spinach," she jerked saucily as he pulled out a chair for her from the long shabbily clothed table, "I'm an egotist with a certain philosophy of life and nothing on earth can alter it. First I am a UNIT; that UNIT is really the only thing that counts. I am out for experience; that experience is to be used in my future and my future is mapped out as secure and unchangeable as the Prudential sign!" And then she laughed as though she were trying to pretend that she didn't mean what she said, but she did.

"That's all very well," he ventured, the dirty menu trembling in his fingers, "but some pretty smart folks get bogged for a while—now take me, I'm collecting material for a world drama but I haven't written it yet. Those things take time."

"Nonsense! I'm afraid you aren't capable of work. Get up early in the morning and do something if it's only a letter to the *Times*. Do something—that's my idea. Of course you'll call that brick-laying, but I'd rather lay bricks than dream so long that I'd wake up some day and find I couldn't even dream any more."

Poor Spinach looked awe-stricken. He was one of those on-the-verge-geniuses and he hated being disquieted. His note books were jammed. His pockets bulged with stray bits written here and there on tickets, railway time tables, backs of envelopes. When they got too full for comfort, he emptied them into a huge trunk and there they reposed in sanctified requiem forevermore.

"As I said, Eve—I'll call you Eve if you don't mind as

I'm a Socialist and everybody's my sister—as I said, the future's alright, but why bother about it. Now's the present and lots of famous people come here to eat and I want you to know them. I love famous people, don't you, Eve?"

"I can't say that I care anything about them," said Eve, "what I want is to meet real people with their common-sense heels flat on the clay."

And having delivered herself of this worthy sentiment which was exactly opposite to the one now raging in her bosom, she leaned over his shoulder and examined the menu in his hands.

It was a battered war-veteran of a card, blotched with soup and city dust and Eve was glad she didn't have to touch it.

For that matter the whole place looked germy. Eve risked a peep at the floor and then drew her skirts tight about her and sat on them.

"Now, what will you have, Miss Kerwin—I mean Miss Eve—what will you have, Eve? You see I'm a Socialist and everybody's my sister—and anyway, like to call folks by first names—more individuality."

And just as Eve was about to decide on something, Spinach left her alone and dashed off to the kitchen where he could be heard shouting economic determinism to the cook.

A tall thin person with a sarcastic twist on the right side of his face walked menacingly into the room and took the seat directly opposite Eve. He shoved his hat under his chair and smoothed his thick blonde hair straight back from his forehead.

As Eve studied him closely she realized that he looked

little-boy brave which is really not brave at all. She could almost see him clenching his fist and fighting with the tears rolling down his face.

He had a thumbed look like some rare old edition and Eve felt a sudden mother pain as her eyes travelled from his saddened face to his thread-bare tie and from his thread-bare tie to his ill-fitting coat and frayed gray flannel cuffs.

He sat low on his spine like Winifred Ward's "Portrait of an Idealist," and Eve could see the angels of vision walking up the stairs of his mind and disappearing into the roofless heavens.

She felt like gathering him all up into her arms and crushing his face against her breast and then, perhaps, kissing his eyes until they smiled. It was his eyes that smote her hardest.

He had a puzzled-animal look as though he had battled bravely against the wilderness, but through some weakness that he scarcely knew how to explain, had been mercilessly banged and beaten.

Eve felt her vision wading through tears and her hands began to tremble.

Just at that moment a beautiful girl—a very goddess of liberty at a menial job, came out of the kitchen, holding aloft not a torch to light the brains of men but a food laden tray to reach the hearts of men.

The blonde man opposite Eve straightened up, "Bring me some lamb chops, will you, June?"

"Anything to drink, Mr. Bird?" Eve noticed that the June person asked the question with almost the feeling of her arms about him.

"Thank you—no—just some water," he answered.

June disappeared into the kitchen at the same time that Spinach emerged with a huge assortment of food on a bright tin tray.

Putting it down gingerly he began to pluck off chops and potatoes, milk, bread, nuts, dates and figs, cheese, and a huge salad.

Then he looked across and discovered the blonde man, "How do you do, Mr. Bird—want you to know Miss Kerwin, from Port Illington, Wisconsin. She's writing books and things and, Miss Kerwin, I want you especially to know Stanley Bird—he does the most marvelous cartoons of anybody I know."

Mr. Bird's thin body was momentarily convulsed with a sort of sarcastic inner burbling as he nodded his head to Eve. His lips were parted in what seemed like a smile, but he didn't make a sound.

Eve began to think that perhaps if he would laugh out instead of just showing his beautiful teeth, he might lose some of that beaten look.

Spinach was unquenchable. "You see I believe in Mr. Bird. He's a Socialist, too, and therefore a brother of mine. And he's a thinker and a genius as well. He's lost faith in himself or he doesn't care much or something but—"

June interrupted with the chops for Mr. Bird and supper for herself and spreading it all out on the table, sat down beside him.

There was something valiant about the way June spread butter on a piece of rye bread and sneaked it onto Mr. Bird's plate. There was something melting about the way she gulped as she watched him settle down hungrily to a meal not big enough for the ten A. M. nibble of a Riverside Drive infant.

"Say, Bird, help a fellow out tonight!" and the June person pushed a large glass of sweet milk toward Mr. Bird.

"Sorry. Can't do anything for you, June—not hungry enough." He pushed the glass back to her.

"Oh, gowan. You know I get my meals for nothing and I've drunk out of this already so I can't put it back. I know! Bet you're afraid of my germs!" June laughed hopefully.

"Deed I'm not, June!" and the thin man's long, blue-veined hand closed round the glass.

Eve felt relieved. At least a part of that enormous void would be filled. She tried to think of something casual to say, but she couldn't.

He spoke, "So you write, Miss Kerwin. What do you write? I don't seem to remember the name." His look was serious and terrified.

Eve's words came in little spurts, "Oh—I write—heaps—short stories principally—I—"

The Goddess of Liberty looked as though she might choke this new woman who had hand-sprung into their midst and she showed it by slamming the dishes together with a loud rattle and swooping off to the kitchen with them.

"And what sort of stories do you write, Miss Kerwin?" There came again that sarcastic twitch to the right hand corner of his mouth.

"Oh, Mr. Bird, if you don't mind, let's talk about your cartoons!"

"My cartoons!" and he rocked with peals of laughter, only they didn't peal. They just shook his frame convulsively.

Spinach came to the rescue, "Now what do you want for dessert, Miss Kerwin—Eve, here's the card. Cornstarch pudding? No, that will make you too fat. Jellatin with whipped cream? That's worth getting fat for. I'll chase back and select it." The big-hearted Spinach hurrid away to the kitchen again.

"And where are you staying, Miss Kerwin?" Stanley Bird looked searchingly at her. "I'd like to see you again—it warms my hands to be around with successful people."

All her life Eve had had a theory that if one claimed to be successful for a sufficient length of time, then one would just naturally become successful. Bluff should be the rule until one really reached somewhere and then proper modesty was an exquisite thing.

In the face of this man she felt suddenly small and mean. She was confused and she wished with all her might that he would not look at her so thoroughly. It was as though her whole psychology stood there naked and ashamed before his honesty.

Eve finally found her tongue. "I'm staying at Marj Prouty's and I'd like very much to have you come to see me. Do you know her?"

"Indeed, yes. I'll drop around tomorrow night if you'll let me." He sank low in his chair and tilted himself un-easily on the two back legs.

"I wish you would, Mr. Bird. You know where Marj lives, of course?" Eve felt a giddy little joy racing all around her brain. She'd get the chance later to explain a lot of things to him and to encourage him. She had an enormous desire to encourage him.

She was so fearful he mightn't find the place that she was going to write the number down on a little slip of

paper. As she took a pencil out of her red leather pocket-book, a brown-haired, sunny man came in and slapped Mr. Bird on the back. He jumped as though he had been torpedoed and turned angrily on the fellow.

"Oh, hello, Fisher, want you to know Miss Kerwin. Miss Kerwin, this is my friend, Anton Otto Fisher. You know. Paints big wolf-men in ice-bound vessels. Real guts in his stuff."

And the brown sunny man shook her hand vigorously and sat down beside them.

"Is Kerr coming tonight?" asked Bird, pushing the mussy menu toward Fisher, "want to see him about that illustration he promised to do for the *Call*."

"Sure, there he is with England. Sit over here, fellows!" and he beckoned the two to the table. Then he continued: "Tell Piet to come on and eat now." Piet was some kind of a Belgian who ran the restaurant and a co-operative store and a magazine on the side.

"Piet! Piet!" called Fisher, and the big ex-European with a seaman's lurch came in from the kitchen splashing and spilling his soup impressionistically down his front.

"Hello, comrades, how you feel? Good, huh? Cold as the devil tonight—huh? No? I thought it was cold." Piet, the inimitable, made one last splash as he settled his plate on the table.

His shoulders were stooped in a way that gave him a forward rushing look. His eyes were sharp and twinkly like a ferret's. They squinted on both sides of a lock of hair that hooked, lobster-claw fashion, down to the tip of his nose.

"Well, Piet, how's business?" Fisher pushed the French bread toward him and he tore off half a yard.

"Damn business!" said Piet, "let's eat!" and he waded valiantly into his soup.

The Goddess of Liberty stalked in and out of the kitchen serving the new-comers in a fit of sulks.

"June's got a real job for the summer. What do you know about it? Three cheers for June and the stage!" and they all lifted their glasses and drank Piet's toast.

June sullenled back into the kitchen. She had been out of a job for a year and it hadn't improved her opinion of the theatrical system.

"Well!" said Mr. Bird, on June's next trip from the regions of frying steak, "don't you care old girl, there'll come a time when we'll have our little Socialist theatres all over the world, then you won't have to accept the manager's attentions along with your salary."

June's temper was in the ascendent and she banged the food down on the table. Nobody cared what June did. What they did care about was that she was straight and clean and not for sale.

Spinach had been quiet for a long while and it hurt Spinach to be quiet so he burst in where he saw the opening, "What do you fellows think of the mess Art Young's got into with his cartoon about the Associated Press?"

Piet beat on the table with the end of his knife, "They can't do a thing to him unless they arrest the thirty-two other editors of *The Masses* and I don't think the A. P. cares to go into wholesale prosecution. They just want to scare us into keeping our mouths shut!" shouted Piet, opening his for a large spoonful of mashed potatoes.

"Well, they can't do that," said Bird, getting up and stretching himself, "the Socialist Party can make a noise if it can't do anything else. His gray flannel shirt was

crawling up and up and threatened to emerge from its stronghold. His belt was buckled so loosely that his trousers slipped down into accordion pleats at his ankles and dusted the floor at his heels.

Eve thought that she had never seen anything so tall as he looked when he stretched and at the same time there had never been anybody so sad and little-boyish. She wanted to say something to him but she dared not. He was sacred and still as a cathedral at early mass. Without wishing it at all, she felt herself falling in love with him easily like coming down a broad flight of steps.

Oh, if she could only think of some way of detaining him! Her hands were pressed tightly together under the table. She didn't know what else she might want of him in the future, but just now all that she wanted of him was that he should not leave her.

She half rose from the chair in her anxiety to interest him, but he left without seeing her and without even turning to bid her good-bye.

CHAPTER VII.

Early in the morning Eve bathed herself and breakfasted. She did her hair with elaboration, pulling out wavy strands here and there to give the effect of carelessness. Her blouses, laid out in military rows on the bed, were tried on in the order of their appearance, and a lacey one chosen at last, that gave alluring suggestions of young breasts and shoulders.

To babble where the strictest secrecy should be observed, she studied her appearance full view, side view and back view, with a hand-mirror held at various angles.

She decided that God might have given her a more convincing chin but then, after all, when she strained her head a little forward and held it stiff, it gave the desired appearance of strength.

With the conquering little turban of purple and gold on her head and her furs hooked up carefully about her throat, she started out.

How fast the feet fly to reach a coveted place! How sturdy are the legs when the mind is full of hope!

Her success was just around the corner. She knew it. It was almost too easy. A sense of obstacles might even have lent an extra dash of pleasure to the adventure.

It sounds like an errand of love. It was. Love of success—the best love, the greatest love, the love that lasts after all the other little loves are buried under soiled and disorderly epitaphs.

Inside her muff, Eve's hands clutched tightly the fat bundle of manuscripts.

At ten minutes past ten she entered the Street & Smith offices on Fifteenth Street and Seventh Avenue. She was perfectly willing at first not to go to Century and Harper's and McClure's—let them find out first what she could do. Every editor was always on the lookout for a new writer. They'd discover her soon enough.


The waiting room was slightly disquieting. It was clean and highly polished like a coffin lid, and she didn't know how to proceed. It was very much like being confronted by artichokes for the first time. One didn't dive right in and cut the thing to pieces only to find that one's neighbors pulled off a leaf at a time. No, sir! One waited till one saw what one's neighbor's did first!

She sat at the center table and turned the pages of Street & Smith's current eruptions. At half-past ten the elevator rolled up and spilled out a well-nourished looking gentleman. He rushed across the room and said something to the girl behind a sort of cashier's window. At once he was admitted.

Eve didn't know what he was admitted to, but what she did know was that he disappeared and that he seemed on excessively friendly terms with the girl who had helped him to disappear.

It was exactly like the adventure with the artichokes. She learned very quickly that the leaves were to be pulled off, dipped in sauce and nibbled at the end. But she had forgotten the strange hairy heart on the inside of the vegetable.

Gathering up her manuscripts, she walked briskly up to the girl at the window.



Women are so uselessly mean to each other. It probably arises from the eternal fight over the minority male.

As Eve approached the girl, an unseen norther must have whisked over her emotions, and dropped her friendliness below zero.

"Well?" she asked, somehow seeing Eve without lifting her eyes from the latest issue of Ainslee's.

Eve felt jolted, "Well—I've some stories I'd like to leave here—they—" but the girl chopped Eve's explanation in the middle.

"For which magazine?"

Eve's face glowed as though it had been exposed to an open fire. "Why, I'll sell them to any of the Street & Smith magazines that want them." And she felt like pulling every blondined strand out of that impudent girl's head.

"We don't accept stuff that way. Address each story to the magazine you intend it for." She shoved some large envelopes toward Eve with the contempt that reaches its superlative in a gum-chewing telephone operator.

Eve was horribly humiliated, but she "considered the source," as her mother used to tell her to do, and with the envelopes in her hand walked dignifiedly to the big coffin-like table in the middle of the room and sat down before it.

Again she skipped through all the latest numbers of the Street & Smith magazines, then sat back bewildered. Why all this ceremony about addressing one's stories to a certain magazine. The stories, in all of them, were exactly alike. They all began the same way and they all ended the same way. She wanted to run. If there had

been any way of eluding the eyes of that blondined creature at the window, Eve would have risked sliding down the cables in the elevator shaft.

Without puzzling her head any longer, she stuffed four stories into each envelope, addressed them haphazardly and took them to the window.

"Got return stamped envelopes?" asked the golden goddess.

"No," quavered Eve, "you didn't give me enough, but I'll go out and buy some and come back in a few minutes." She was dizzy. Her throat was dry and her eyes blurred.

At a sub-station, with the assistance of an old druggist and a pair of scales, she weighed and addressed the beloveds back to herself.

"A writer, too, Miss?" asked the old man with a forlorn note in his register, "lots of 'em in this neighborhood."

Somehow Eve got the idea that he, too, had been insulted by a blondined office girl, and it was all she could do to keep from throwing her arms about his neck and weeping on his gray mohair coat. But the old bravado came back and she talked gaily as she moistened the stamps, "Yes, I write a bit!" and with the words she grew a whole new crop of egotism.

"Used to write myself one time. Sold a lot to the Munsey folks, but somebody with a newer twist stepped in and they got tired of my stuff and I couldn't write any other kind, so I quit."

Then he had actually sold something! She stepped up close to him as though it might rub off. She grabbed his hand and shook it vigorously. "Well, don't let them down you. You just keep on writing. You can make 'em all sit up and take notice if you want to hard enough."

He smiled a sweet old smile at her, "Child, I wouldn't write again for worlds. Haven't done a line since the old Argosy days," and he stored up a dozen little comforting pats on her shoulder as though he was positive she might be in need of them some day.

She had no idea what "The Old Argosy Days" were. At her house they had taken the *Century* and the *Survey*. She looked sympathetic, however, and murmured, "I see."

He walked to the door with her and she dropped her envelopes into the mail box.

Fifteen minutes later she was drinking soda at Greenhut's fountain. "It doesn't really matter," she thought, "nothing really matters." At the same time she dug her long spoon energetically into the bottom of the glass for the last bit of cream and the last crushed strawberry. "These bitter experiences are material. Good material. All great people go through just such things."

Almost blithely she bought a *Red Book* and hurried up to the public library on Fifth Avenue to study its contents. After all one can't be aloof from the market.

Anybody who had taken the trouble to watch her might have seen a sarcastic curl in her upper lip. At four o'clock she smashed the covers together. "Rotten stuff! The worst story I've written is better than the best of these. It's pull, that's exactly what it is—pull! People that get in have got pull!"

Out in the street she felt cold and forlorn. She just couldn't get the courage to cross Fifth Avenue. Fifteen minutes she waited, her teeth chattering and her lips blue. An officer walked over and took her arm. She was sorry he had got her across safely. Perhaps it might have been better if one of those ichthyosaurian busses had squashed her to death.

"Poor old druggist," she muttered to herself, "I bet he wrote good stuff and nobody wanted it." Her legs began to weigh forty tons apiece and her hips ached as though she had done a week's washing. She could scarcely push along. Never before had she believed that there was failure in the world for people who really wanted success. "Poor old druggist, I bet he wrote good stuff and nobody wanted it." She couldn't get him out of her mind. Suddenly she became the old man, doing a menial job in her dotage. She hunted for the job and became a cook. She sobbed as she washed the prunes and told each new mistress that she had been a wonderful writer, but the world had denied her the chance. Then she refused to be a cook any longer and took carbolic acid. That was a horrible death and she changed it to bichloride. One lingered horribly with bichloride. It would be better to gain the sympathy of some chemist, get a phial of cyanide from him, go into the woods and build a huge funeral pyre, light it, swallow the cyanide and step into the flames.

By that time she reached a grocery store on Avenue A, and went in for some crackers and cheese and things. But nobody would wait on her. People came in, bought what they wanted, went away and still she sat there drooping on a sugar barrel without strength enough to demand attention.

She looked straight into the grocer's eyes and his gaze went through her to the boxes of rice and baking powder and cornstarch on the shelf behind. She was so tired she simply couldn't speak and then, quivering with a little fear, she examined her muff very carefully. Perhaps she was so ineffectual that she was no longer visible to the naked eye.

Then she stood up suddenly and pushed the people out

of her way. "I want a pound of butter and a dozen eggs and a box of brown rice!"

The line of waiting people fell back and the grocer said: "Yes, Ma'm," and jumped about like a monkey on a stick.

"Anything else, Ma'm?" he asked nervously, laying her purchases in a neat pile.

"Yes!" she snapped, "five cents' worth of yellow cheese, a box of Saltines and a loaf of Straight Edge bread—quick!"

"Yes, Ma'm," he said, and produced them.

"That's all!" said Eve, smashing the money down on the counter and grabbing up her package.

She heard the people gasp as she upset a stack of soap on her rush to the door which she banged behind her.

"That's the stunt!" she argued, "step all over 'em! Weariness is a mental attitude and you mustn't let it get you. Imitate the fiend at the Street & Smith offices. That's the kind of warfare there is in this world and you can't beat it with sentimentality. Don't be like the poor old failure of a druggist; that's no way to succeed. The Street & Smith girl had it right. Be a devil! Be a devil! Be a devil!"

CHAPTER VIII.

Eve's vicious mood lasted till she reached the tenements. Those five flights of stairs crumpled her all up again. She stood dejectedly confronting Marj's fire-proof door.

Now, windows have expression and character. It is no difficult job, say, to pick out So-and-so's house though it be squeezed in among fifty of the same pattern.

One simply walks along looking at the windows and muttering to one's self, "No, not this one—nor this—nor this—she wouldn't be guilty of such curtains!"

And then the heart leaps! Along comes a house with limpy scrim instead of battenburg lace; no bourgeois looping at the sides, just long lines of rich cream folds. "Ah! There is where she lives!" Without even so much as looking at the number, one walks up with the assurance of a book-agent and bumps the knocker.

But doors are different—especially fire-proof tenement doors. They all shriek "BEGONE!" Marj had realized this at once. Therefore the little Chinese lacquer chair and the free-for-all invitation in perpetual bloom on the door jamb. Together they somehow took off the curse.

Doors simply can't be trusted. They're like severe-pretending fathers. Veritable dragons! When all the time they have chocolate drops in their overcoat pockets.

Eve wasn't to be fooled by that hideous brown sheet of iron. She had seen the fairyland behind.

"Marj!" she called, flinging open the door. But Marj was gone and the fairyland was cold and dismal and windy.

Slinging her coat angrily at the couch, Eve banged down all the windows, then without even removing her hat, went into the kitchen, scrambled three eggs and stood at the stove eating them with a spoon. They needed salt. She looked up dramatically at the salt box. Who was she that she should have salt on her eggs?

On the way back to the living room a stale nubbins of bread found its way into her mouth.

She dropped to the couch throwing her little conquering turban of purple and gold on the floor. The black cat came up and rubbed his body against her arm and sniffed into her ear.

"Mutsie," she moaned, "this world's an awful place. You don't know it because you have hamburger steak and raw eggs every day. You ought to be an alley cat for a week. You'd just naturally starve to death. That's exactly what you would—you'd turn your toes up from the asphalt."

It might all be perfectly true but Mutsie wasn't going to worry her head about it. She crawled up under Eve's arm and purring like a high-powered engine, settled herself for a warm nap.

But Eve was a talkative bed-fellow, "Think of being crowded out after you really arrive, Mutsie, isn't it just too pathetic? Perhaps it would be better not to have so much ambition. Perhaps it would be better not to have any ambition at all. The women that seem to have the best time are the ones that follow the cow-path. But one

can't just say 'follow the cow-path,' and follow. There are all sorts of inside forces that push."

"Uh, it's cold in here!" she said, and reaching down for a lovely old camel's-hair shawl, included Mutsie under it and went to sleep.

The boats slid by on the river and the dark came down against the windows.

Suddenly over the blackness tinkled the Chinese bells, and Eve not certain whether she was in Hong Kong or Port Illington, or whether it was dewy morn or starry night, stumbled up dazedly to the door.

And nobody at all was there. The bells tinkled again. No doubt the postman ringing from down stairs. She propped the door open with a miniature totem pole that dangled by a golden cord from the knob, and walked out on the open stairway.

"Hello, up there!" shouted someone from below. At once Eve recognized the voice of the cartoonist man and her hands flew up to her sleep-straggled hair.

"Hello, Mr. Bird, come on up!" she answered, not leaning too far over and figuring out at the same time just how long it would take a slow person like himself to reach the top floor so as better to know just how long it would give a swift person like herself to get in order before his arrival.

He looked squat and mashed from the height of the sixth floor, and still standing there with his hands in his pockets, shouted again: "Hello, up there!"

"Well, hello yourself! Why don't you come up?"

"Why, your box is all chucked full of mail. Drop me your key. I'll bring it up."

Eve rushed back into the flat and, tying a thick cord to

the key, flung it over the railing. She listened for the metallic click on the asphalt and then not wasting another second, darted into the bedroom and rearranged her hair and powdered and rouged her face.

Stanley Bird trudged up so slowly that she had been waiting whole eons of time, when finally he lumbered into the living room.

"That's a goll dern climb," he puffed, banging the mail on the table and folding up like a camp chair on the cushiony divan.

Eve looked sidewise at the long envelopes on the table, and standing so as to obscure them from his view, scraped her foot ingenuishly back and forth on the Bokharra rug.

"Awfully glad to see you, Mr. Bird. Asleep when you rang. Dead tired. Down town all day."

But Stanley was not to be diverted. "Who's been writing all that stuff—some of your gems?" and he reached his long arm out and teasingly pulled her off the nest.

"Yes, they are mine," she snapped, "but you shan't see them." Her hand flew out and covered the pile.

"Far be it from me to wade through those Parnassian bogs—when'd you send them out?"

Eve's head flopped into her elbow and she smeared all her pretty primpings up with tears.

"Gee, I'm sorry," said Stanley, looking as awkward as a truck horse.

Eve sobbed and muttered and felt very unromantic, blowing her nose and reddening her eyes before the nicest man she had ever met. "I don't care—you can't tell me it's not pull. The whole thing's pull. I left those stories at Street & Smith's before noon and they simply couldn't have read them and sent them back already—they—they

just don't want to find new authors, that's what they don't!" And she actually stamped her feet as though she were still in pinafores.

Stanley came over and put one hand on her shoulder. "Here, now, this won't do. Let's look at the damn things. I know a jug-full about everybody's business but my own and maybe I can help. Go now and bathe your eyes and smear on some more paint."

Eve did as she was bidden and came back to him, where he was sitting on the couch, and tore the envelopes angrily off her beloved manuscripts.

"Always remember, Miss Kerwin, that nobody gets *nowhere* without five-finger exercises. You've gotta invent your own."

"Well, I've just about read every book on the short story that's been written and I thought I knew exactly how to do it. I still believe it's pull that gets such mess published as I waded through this afternoon in the *Red Book*."

"Now, that remark alone, would show that you are an amateur of the verdantest green. Very little gets in through pull. Magazines are crazy for new stuff. Good stuff. Let me have a look at yours."

Stanley began on number one of Eve's masterpieces. He read aloud. "Fifty years ago tonight—"

"That won't do. It was great stuff in the golden eighties, as Bob Davis would say." And Stanley laid the story behind him.

"But, Mr. Bird," wailed Eve, "that's a really true story. It happened right next door—"

Stanley interrupted her, "Chuck it, and give me the next one. True stories don't make fiction."

Stanley Bird jumped to his feet. "My God, you've got a dream story!" He scattered the pages on the couch, laughing so loudly that the wind bells above him jangled from the vibrations in the air.

"This is rich!" he laughed some more, and marched up and down the room. Finally, stopping right in front of her, he said: "So, you aren't a famous person after all. You aren't even an honest person. You are just one grand and glorious bluff!"

Eve felt hotly angry. Angry at herself for deceiving, and angry at him for not giving her the chance to explain. And then her fury barricaded itself behind her desire to succeed and, in a weak and humble tone, she asked, "Will you help me? I really want to learn."

He looked very sober and pulled at an imaginary beard. "Well. I'll make a bargain with you. I'll try for a while to see if you've got it in you—there is no evidence of it thus far. If I discover nothing more as I proceed, then you've got to promise to take a course in cooking or dressmaking, or scrub-womaning—something that will suit you better. Do you promise?"

"Yes, of course, but—"

"Now, for gem number three." He read the first few lines and laid it near its kind. "Ah, 'tis another dream, and the dreamer awakes. It won't do, my dear. Under no circumstances do they allow dreams in a magazine office."

Eve missed his meaning and blurted out. "That's perfectly absurd, if it's a surprise. Nobody on earth would have known it was a dream till the very last line!"

"I knew it, me che-ild, and I've only read the first three."

"And *the* next," he growled, "Once upon a time—why do you begin a story at the beginning, Mrs. Hans Anderson?"

"And where should I begin?" she asked, angrily pressing her lips into a tight little line.

"In the middle, of course. Do you know Bob Davis' famous formula for beginning a story—no? Well—" "George Blake rose from his chair, readjusted the gardenia in his buttonhole, slammed shut his roll-top desk, and fell dead." "Hand me that magazine over there?"

She almost pitched it at him.

He turned the pages slowly and, in about five minutes, stopped, "Here—now, I'll show you why this story sold."

Eve sneered. "I've read every story in that number and they're *all* rotten! You can't show me one in there that's as good as the worst of mine!"

He closed the magazine with a bang. "If that's the way you feel about it, then it's no use."

"Oh, go on and tell me," she pleaded.

"Young lady, you just come down from that skyscraper and lay your little pink ear to the earth—Indians might be coming!"

He opened the magazine again and read: "The burglar lay dead at the bottom of the well."

"Punk!" muttered Eve.

"Perhaps, but it grabs your interest!"

"Not mine!" and she looked disinterestedly out of the window.

"Well, Miss Low-high-brow, you're not the American public and, believe me, that's the god you'll have to serve

unless you're great, like Conrad, and people will read you even if they don't know what you're driving at."

"I'd rather scrub floors."

"Alright, I'll give you your first job. My studio looks like hell." Stanley walked leisurely up and down the whole length of the room.

She stopped him midway in one of his journeys. "I'm a conceited fool, Mr. Bird, and I *will* listen to you if you'll tell me what to do; but now, honestly, in that Street & Smith office, did they read my stories?"

"They didn't have to, Miss Kerwin. One line was enough to show them you didn't belong. That doesn't mean that you can't belong. You've got as good a chance as any other boob. If I were you I'd get a typewriter and sign up for a good correspondence course, and I'd whack away for a year and find out all I could about short stories. Ten to one you'll sell eventually, that is, if you have anything to say to folks and I think you have. If I'm anywhere in the neighborhood at that time, and I find you haven't, I'll see that you learn to make bread and boil potatoes. Everybody doesn't have to be a writer, you know!"

"But, I have something to say!" she announced with so much conviction, that even Stanley was completely won over.

"You know, Miss Kerwin, when I heard you talk last night, I thought your name was already in the Hall of Fame, and then, after I got home, I wondered why I had never heard of you. Then, it dawned on me that you were another one of those persons who laughs to keep from crying."

They both turned to the window and stood there, side

by side, thinking the same thoughts and watching the near island lights and the clumsy mud-scows, creeping out to sea, with their own desolate burdens.

Marj's miniature grandfather's clock chimed eight. Stanley put his hand on Eve's shoulder and turned her about. "Come on, Miss Kerwin, let's go up to the roost and see Fannie's First Play—that is, if you've got fifty cents to spare?"

Eve reached for her little red pocketbook. "Of course I have!"

"Well," he said, with mock seriousness, "so have I—just fifty!"

CHAPTER IX.

All during the play Stanley was bursting with chuckles. It was a clever performance, there was no denying that, but Eve, being a female of exaggerated practicality, was thinking far more of the proximity of her escort's arm. It was warm and comforting. She leaned against it ever so daintily. There came a sudden response from his elbow. She was not entirely inexperienced so she was compelled to assure herself that his answer was not a mistake. However, to be delivered from all possible doubt, she leaned again. This time his hand crept over and covered hers where it lay, seemingly without plan or purpose, on her near knee.

Then, there came an understanding, and, after that, during all the dark times in the theatre his hand sought hers. He grew peregrinations. He squeezed it first on her knee and then on his knee and, still desiring more infinite variety, moved it to the hard mahogany arm that did duty between their two seats, and squeezed it there.

Always as the lights flashed on at the end of each act, their hands flew apart and Eve, at least, sat back thrilled with the drama of her own affairs. It was fortunate that she did not have to stand an examination on "Fannie's First Play." She would have got a minus zero.

All sorts of sweet dizzy thoughts were sizzling in her brain. It wasn't by any means the first time she had been in love, but it was the nicest time.

The other men hadn't needed her. This man did need her. To be more exact, he needed someone and though it is an advanced age in which we stroll, possession still counts for nine-tenths of the law.

He would be a difficult man. There was no denying that. The very enormity of the job attracted her. Definitely, at the end of the second act, she decided to make him her husband.

Afterward, when she thought it all over, she couldn't remember whether they rode back or walked, but she remembered distinctly that Marj was still up sewing on a pink silk "comby," and that she pitched it aside and made them some hot chocolate.

Marj and Stanley were old friends and they had worked up a sort of sense of humor act that nobody else on earth understood. They would turn over the pages of a magazine together and, picking out an advertisement, transfer the low-brow wording to other situations in life.

Bursting with laughter, they would string this along for hours to the discomfort of everybody else present.

With the pot of hot chocolate between them they started off on "Pebeco" and Eve, quite unable to get what they were driving at, was left outside in the cold with the hot cup on her knee. Their hilarity seemed all out of proportion, but she begrudged them nothing. She was only too glad to be left alone with all the serious lovely thoughts dancing about in her own brain.

Stanley reached for more chocolate and Marj took the cozy off the pot and overflowed his cup.

"Aw, Marj, you didn't leave any room for sugar!" He took another cup from the table, put ten lumps in it, then filled the space that was left from his flooded saucer.

"I like sugar," he said, spooning a soaked lump and putting it into his mouth, "why does Eve Kerwin wear corsets?"

Marj doubled up with screams of laughter. "Stanley, you are the most irrelevant thing. To answer you in proper sequence, I know you like sugar and all people in Port Illington wear corsets—it's proper!"

He turned to Eve and took her cup to be refilled, "Is that your real reason, Eve Kerwin?"

"Well, not exactly. First of all, my clothes wouldn't fit. I loathe corsets. Always have. Wobble like a duck when I don't wear them." Eve stirred her chocolate viciously.

"That's because you don't know how to dress. Look at Marj!" and Stanley lifted the resisting Marj from her chair and stood her on her feet.

"Yes, *do* look at Marj!" said Eve, with a great show of sarcasm. "We weigh one hundred and fifty-six pounds, together, and Marj weighs at least six of them all by herself, and you're no gentleman if you doubt her!"

"That's all right, Miss Smarty," said Stanley, setting Marj back into the big chair and putting her cup within reach again. "Marj would know how to dress without corsets if she were a baby elephant."

"Which, of course, means that I'm a baby elephant," and Eve pretended to pout. "Well, I'm not! I only weigh three pounds more than I ought to!"

"And, why do you?" asked Stanley, pointing the finger of pride at his own bosom. "I weigh thirty-five pounds less than I ought to!"

Eve suddenly felt an ambition more consuming than any other she had ever known in her life: to find those thirty-

five pounds and add them to him. She pictured herself with a great chunk of fat, sticking a piece on here, a piece on there, much the same as sculptors add noses and ears and cheeks. She saw herself smoothing him off with her thumb until he became the well-rounded image his enormous height suggested he should be.

"Well, if I were your mother!" Eve shook her finger at him, "I'd stuff you till you got that thirty-five pounds—skeletons needn't be so haughty about it."

She darted off to the kitchen and returned with a huge he-slice of bread with butter on both sides. "Now, eat that! Use this fork or you'll get yourself all slippery!" She stood before him frowning.

With serenity Stanley ate the bread and butter, then looked up at Eve still towering above him.

"You're a nice mother person, Eve, aren't you?" he asked.

Marj gathered up her sewing. "This is no place for a respectable chaperon," she said, and gently closed herself in the little room.

"Well, you *are* a mother person, aren't you, Eve?" he repeated.

"I don't know what I am, but I do know that you can't be well unless your nerves have little fat cradles to lie in."

Stanley got up and walked to the window. "My nerves are never still long enough to lie anywhere. They're scraping and scratching like a flock of chickens all the time."

Eve followed him and put her hand on his shoulder. "Won't you let me help you, Mr. Bird—Stanley, won't you let me encourage you back to your work. I'd lots

rather do that than be successful myself. In that exquisite moment of sacrifice Eve took her place beside the Savonarolas of history.

"Oh, I can't work! Hang it all, I *can't* work!" In his voice was that terror-note like the wail of a wolf when the trap gnashes down on his foot.

Eve took his big hand in hers and coaxed him over to the couch just as you lead a resisting child into something that you know he really longs to do.

"Why can't you work? Come, tell me all about it—it'll do you good to talk. Let's sit down here on the couch and see what can be done.

"Aw, what's the use bothering you with my troubles. I'm a failure and a mess and there's an end to the argument."

"But you're not a failure and a mess. You're just discouraged temporarily. Can't you sell what you draw?"

Perhaps in the interest that she felt for him was a dash of that insane passion that we all feel to run other people's affairs. Or perhaps it was just the re-awakening of that earlier emotion to crush him up to her breasts and keep him there.

He laughed piteously. "Sell! Why, I can sell every damn line that I draw. Trouble is, I can't draw. Can't see its worth-whileness any more. Sit down and work myself to death over a lot of puny stuff for a fat capitalist to chuckle over! God! I can't see anything any more but Socialism!"

"Well, why don't you work for Socialism, then?"

"That's what I am doing and starving at the job. What's more, I'm not even doing that well. But what do you know about all this? You're not a Socialist, nor

anything else, that I can see—you don't know a blamed thing about life!"

"But I'm willing to learn. I heard you say yourself that every decent-minded person is a Socialist. Whatever else you may think of me I'm sure you believe I'm decent-minded."

Eve felt hopeless in the face of his problem. She had lost all vision for her own. The tears began to tumble.

Passionately, he crushed her up to him. "My God, don't cry over me whatever else wasteful you may do. I'm not even worth the salt in those tears and salt's just five cents a sack!"

CHAPTER X.


Eve stayed on, but the atmosphere in the Tenement was a trifle strained. After dragging about for days, Marj had collapsed completely and Eve was too sympathetic to scold. But Marj wanted to be scolded. It was the one thing needed to arouse her combativeness again. Especially this morning, on her first real venture out of bed, she ached to be called a damn fool, but nobody did, so she dressed herself and struggled down town without any breakfast just to prove that she was one.

Eve went marketing on First Avenue. Stanley was coming to luncheon. She purchased two net reticules full of chops and salad, milk, cheese, bread, butter, carrots, peas and cauliflower. As she stumbled up the tenement steps with her load she was planning on that thirty-five pounds that she was going to add to Stanley. Today's luncheon would mean two at least.

She scraped the carrots, shelled the peas, washed the salad and turned the cauliflower, head down in a bowl of water. The off-fall from her vegetables was a dish pan filled to the brim.

"Great Caesar," she commented, "more to throw away than there is to eat—regular withered city trash!"

Then she put the carrots and peas on to cook. From the bottom of Marj's cupboard she fished out some Irish potatoes. "Fattening," she whispered gleefully putting them on the toaster to bake beside the carrots and peas.



The table was laid artistically with brown mountains of whole wheat bread, crackers, cake, cheese, celery and then just as she was lighting the oven for the chops, he knocked at the door and her heart leapt excitedly.

It was exactly twelve o'clock. She hadn't expected him so soon. She had even secretly feared that he might forget to come at all.

"I'm terribly glad to see you!" she said, grabbing him by both hands and pulling him into the living room. "How corking you look!"

The big blonde boy pushed his soft frayed cuffs into his sleeves and made a desperate attempt to keep his coat collar snug up to the back of his neck, but wriggle as he would, there still remained a pitiable gap.

"Well I ought to look nice. I did my best. I bathed and shaved and brushed my clothes and cut my molasses hair as far back as I could reach and left the balance for you to do," he laughed, handing her the scissors from a pile of Marj's sewing stacked on the tea wagon.

"But, I've never cut anybody's hair in my life. I don't know how to begin!" She opened and shut the scissors convulsively.

"Well, you just cut!" he said, motioning for her to stand up on a chair so as to reach him.

Eve scrambled up and Stanley turned and shouted: "Eince, Zwei, beginnin'!"

"Oh I'm terribly afraid!" she wailed snipping out a great yellow chunk and dropping it in the hand that he held up to catch the shearings.

He looked at the clump in his palm. "Well I should think you would be—go a little easy and don't cut all in one spot."

Then Eve grew courageous and clipped and snipped with a great manner of assurance. At last she said, "Now that's the very best I can do!" and jumped down from the chair.

Stanley viewed himself in the long mirror between the river windows and remarked dejectedly, "You'd never make your living as a lady-hair-cutter. Now I'll have to wait till it all grows out long again before I dare face a barber. He'd say 'Wife been cutting your hair?' " Then he laughed till he shook all over in that same silent repressed way.

"Laugh out loud!" cried Eve, pretending to tickle him in the ribs, "Open your mouth wide and howl. I heard you do it once!"


And he did open his mouth and he did laugh out big and loud, but shaky like an infant trying to walk for the first time.

"Well bless its heart, it has a laugh—course it has, only it was afraid to let its mama hear it!" She took his hand and dragged him into the kitchen and told him to "forward march" with the vegetables.

He tried his best to help, but everywhere she turned she met him. His large clumsy self seemed suddenly transformed into triplets and quadruplets.

At last they sat feasting at the little round table. Every time he looked out of the window, Eve slipped more vegetables on his plate and more milk into his glass. She was scared to death he might wake up and refuse to be stuffed. Her fears were groundless. He ate and ate and ate until she surmised his legs were hollow.

Apropos of nothing he blurted out: "Why do you wear silk waists? If you'd kept up with the Paterson strike I



don't believe you'd ever wear silk on your body again. Why, when those poor devils gave that demonstration in Madison Square Garden there were women and men, with babies in their arms, that had walked all the way from Paterson to New York City and most of them hadn't had a bite of food for three days. Heroism! Why they stumbled and fell all along the way, but three thousand of them managed to get there. God! I wouldn't wear an inch of silk for a seat in the ball-headed row of Heaven!"

Eve's back began to ache. She felt terrified by the vast forces about which she know nothing. "Would you rather I didn't wear silk? I never thought of the misery that's woven into it?"

"It's nothing to me what you wear only it seems that a girl like you wouldn't sport expensive junk till the other three-fourths of the world at least had its gizzard full!"

There came the phantom of a choke in her throat. "Please don't be angry with me—tell me what I should wear."

"A cotton middy and a wool skirt and no corsets. Uh! How I hate a female form divine in corsets."

Eve left him excavating a mountain of whipped cream that concealed a sponge cake and darted into the bedroom slamming the door.

At first she sounded angry, but the scurrying little female noises assured him that she was not. Angry ladies are *quiet*. Anybody knows that much about women.

She returned middy bloused, checked skirted. Gray deer-skin sandals covered her feet.

Stanley rose so suddenly that he swept his knife and fork to the floor.

"Now I like you," he said; this way you're human. I hope you'll never have fine clothes again, at least not till the *good day* comes, then maybe you won't be the only one who wears them.

Eve was all warm inside with his approval. He was splendid. He was great. The only life worth living was a purposeful life. His life was purposeful. Everything he said thrilled her exquisitely. But being young and full of healthy appetite, she sat down on her side of the table to finish her sweet before she proceeded with her plans.

Stanley piled up dishes and followed her back and forth to the kitchen, bumping into her at every turn and spilling things along the way. His lack of enjoyment was so evident that she led him to the couch and put the *New York Times* in his hands.

"Damned capitalist sheet!" he said, slamming it to the floor. Eve smiled at his petulance—it was so childish. Next she offered him Walling's something-or-other on Socialism.

The pages were uncut and he occupied himself with the job till he found Eve once more at his side.

"Now, I want to talk to you Stanley and I don't want you to read while I'm doing it. I want you to look straight at me because I'm serious."

He looked straight at her.

"What work have you done today?"

"None," he answered.

"What yesterday?"

"None!"

"Why?"

"I can't work I tell you. I'm too unhappy and lonely

to work. I want to be a tramp. I'm a failure I tell you and I'll never try again." His face went down into his hands and he sighed heavily.

Eve knelt before him and took his two hands into her own. He drew back suddenly, but she clung to him and whispered, "Let me help you."

"What can you do? You take my advice and stay out of this. You'll get your fingers burnt."

"I don't care what happens to me," she whispered, "I've had a vision!" Her eyes were lit and her fingers trembled as they closed more tightly over his.

"Please Eve don't kneel down here in front of me—I'm nothing to kneel to!" He tried to pull her to her feet.

"Please let me kneel. I've never been as happy. I want to help. Now listen to me. I think I love you. If it isn't love, it's better. I have one thousand dollars. We can marry, take a two room tenement and live on that till you're started again. I don't care if I never learn to write if I can only love you into your work. Your work is the big thing to me—your work! Not my work!" And the tears gushed pitiously down her cheeks.

Stanley looked stricken. He just stared and stared like a hurt thing that sees the open gate, but is unable to reach it.

She pleaded again. "You say you're a failure and a tramp—then—it doesn't much matter whom you marry. Perhaps you don't care for me, but if I only ask you to risk what you are now, then all that I make you into will be mine! Oh it will be something big and fine—won't you trust me?"

Stanley drew her, still kneeling, up close to him and

stroked her hair. He looked confused, then he kissed her and the tears rolled down his face.

"I haven't anything to offer you, dear girl, but failure. Most likely I'll never have anything to offer you but failure. I have big, brave ideas, but they all die!"

"But they won't die, Stanley, if I care for them." She pressed her face close to his breast and wept quietly. He kissed her hair again and again.

And later they talked about wedding rings being a relic of barbarism and about the "open door" through which either might flee if he chose and then he gathered her all up to him again and whispered: "Yours for the Revolution!" and she clung and whispered back: "Yours for the Revolution!"

And when he was gone she crept into bed and dreamed that she had exchanged her one thousand dollars for bread and butter and filled a tenement with it and turned him in to feed and once every night she came to see that he was well covered with warm blankets so that he wouldn't get cold while he slept.

CHAPTER XI.

It didn't take but ten minutes in Hoboken and Eve stuck to her own name, not because she wanted to, but because it was the only modern thing to do.

Marj said it was the only practical way out as of course one always married again and again and this everlasting shifting of names was inconsiderate and mixy for the public.

Marj was in a fever of inspiration over the furnishings of the three-dollar-and-seventy-five-cents-a-week tenement that the young couple had selected as their home. She made all tenementers go down into their lockers and see what they could do without.

Her own donation was two wool blankets and a gray cotton understudy. Some one gave a bed and some one else lent two Windsor chairs and a kitchen table and with a bit of taffeta here and a splash of cretonne there, a bucket of paint and some stencils, the two drab little rooms overlooking the roofs were turned into an interior decorator's dream.

The gas stove was in the living-room and so was the stationary wash tub and sink—but Marj! Oh, the genius of Marj! Sherlock Holmes himself would have been puzzled over what reposed under those golden India prints.

Of course, time-payment houses have wrecked the word "Nest," but The Shepherd was still keen about it so he

painted the once magic symbol on a white enamelled board and nailed it over the front door.

The Shepherd was terribly excited over "The Nest." He contributed a Soken Yamaguchi print for the living room wall and a huge lantern for the corner and himself attached the wires that lighted its insides and made it look like a Chinaman's heaven.

Back and forth over the roof to Marj's flat he pounded like a moving van. All Marj's friends became moving vans sooner or later. Time enough to carry her own bundles after she married.

When everything was in apple-pie order, she marched out with Eve's money and bought all the eats for the house-warming. By eight o'clock the bell was in a constant state of ringing.

The Shepherd, as a sort of master of ceremonies, stood at the door and received.

First came the painter-man and the sculptor-man from the tenements across the way and behind them trooped Mr. Mullins, the painter-man's huge collie, who purred like a cat and thought he was a lap dog. Mr. Mullins positively occupied the entire flat until Marj asked him to delequesce under the cot.

Then came an over-the-roof writer whose eyes were brown and deep like velvet—cut velvet, some one had said. The whole universe grew mysterious when one tried to imagine the very bottoms of them.

He stood in the doorway, dark-skinned and tall. In his hands was a Canton bowl—his offering to the ceremony.

"Oh, isn't it a love!" screeched Marj jumping up and down and running her thin fore-finger along the raised

houses and animals that inhabited its sides. "Such blue! Did you ever see such blue?"

Eve admired it and Stanley was silent and the painter-man and the sculptor-man discussed it in terms of art. Then they all discovered that there was no place to stand it.

Marj gave a little yelp of joy, poked her key into The Shepherd's hand and pushed him out on the landing. "She can use my little Swiss bracket!"

"Where is it?" begged the weary Shepherd. By actual count he had made sixty-five trips over the roof to Marj's house. Marking sixty-six on a little white paper that was pinned to the door-jamb, he moaned and asked again

"Where is it, Marj?"

"In the right-hand back corner of the box-couch, Silly! As if you didn't see me put it there your very own self."

The Shepherd went and the Shepherd came, but there was no Swiss bracket in his hand and Marj at first reproachful and then apologetic, decided that it was behind the bread-box near the dill-pickle jar.

They nailed the bracket in an excellent light on the west wall and the bit of blue was placed thereon. Then the blind musician came and it was taken down again so that he might see it with his fingers.

Arrived at last, the little bob-haired girl who had gone in for education. She flung herself disconsolate on the couch and groaned.

"Just what is the tragedy this evening, Myra?" asked the artist-man seating himself beside the little relaxed figure.

"Aw, nothing; only going back to high-school when

your brain cells have gone dry makes you feel like a calcium when the wires are cut."

"Well, then, why do you do it?" asked the sympathetic artist-man. "Ain't you smart enough—you had a good job?"

"No, *I ain't* smart enough! And I hate good jobs. Too hard to find another one. Anyway, you think I want to be a stenog, all my life?"

"Well, teachin's no cinch either."

"Better'n typewriting. You're the boss and you can wallop kids when you're mad." The big dog came out at this and rubbed himself against her knees. "Mr. Mullins stop it! You make as many unnecessary moves as a taxi driver. Stop it I tell you—you're all fleazy—get away!"

The artist-man backed Mr. Mullins under the couch again and asked: "Why don't you get married?"

"Who?" she fairly bit off the word. The only men worth talking to are loafers and loafers make bum husbands."

Marj had permitted the attention of the mob to be diverted just as long as she could stand it. She burst into the conversation. "Now you all quit sympathizing with Myra. Tragic Myra! When disaster really happens, she's in her normal atmosphere."

Marj held up a high-ball. "Here's to 'The Nest,' and here's to the newlyweds—may they have many troubles and be sorry ever after!"

"Bravo!"

"Three cheers!"

"Speech, Stanley, speech!"

Stanley rose and addressed his guests. "Well, I'm just

going to say the goll-derndest old fashionedest thing I know how to say. This is the happiest day of my life, and I mean every word of it. I've just married the best-ever woman and we're going to do our share toward the re-making of the commonwealth. I never realized that I had power till I met Eve Kerwin, and, by heck, now I'm a regular Consolidated Electric Light Company! From this day on there'll be no more dawdling in my life. Just plain every day *doing*, and that's the way to make the dreams come true!"

Mr. Mullins jumped out and up on his hind legs and mourned dismally.

Everybody laughed. Myra wailed. "See, even Mr. Mullins doubts the truth of your statements. He says there ain't no such animal as happiness."

"Deed you're mistaken," said the painter-man. "Mr. Mullins is saying: 'Hear! Hear!' like a regular House of Lords—you gotta understand a dog's technique same as humans."

"Make him go away!" grumled Myra. "I hate dogs and dreams. I'm going home."

Marj reprimanded her. "Oh, Myra, you're a regular old sinker. Drink a cocktail and come up to the surface."

Everybody crowded around the center table and drank and ate sandwiches and made speeches, and then, everybody being perfectly happy, got its hat and coat and trudged home.

Eve and Stanley stood with their arms about each other looking out into the night. They squeezed their cheeks against the window pane and slanted their eyes to the left for what they called "their view" of the river.

It wasn't much of a view and they loved the river, so

they raced up to the roof and hung over the parapet to get the full sweep of its wide gray beauty.

All the chimneys of Manhattan sloped away from them in silent miles. The boats stole up the river and the boats stole down the river and one that was very big sent wave upon wave against the bank and blinked its lighted eyes at the lovers on the roof.

Eve shivered and flew into Stanley's arms.

"Why do you shiver, my little wife?"

"Because I was thinking of the time when I didn't have you."

"Well, that's silly, because people who haven't troubles never know how to appreciate them. You have me now, you little Piggy-wig, and I have you forever and ever and ever and ever."

"Uh, that's a long time!" laughed Eve. "Mightn't you get awfully bored?"

"Oh, I'll take long vacations when it looks threatening."

"You won't either!" she pouted and clung close to him. "You won't want any. Aren't you glad I was a direct actionist and asked you to marry me?"

"Well ra-ther. You see I couldn't ask you to marry me because *you* had the thousand dollars! Really, dear, you're asking me was just the beautifulest thing on earth. Just exactly what I needed: love and encouragement. Eve, dear, we're going to give the whole wide world something to gossip about."

"I forbid you to use the word *gossip* in connection with my husband!" and she pretended to box his ears and then kissed them. "You must say we'll give the whole world

something to sing a cantata about or something to write an epic about—that's better, isn't it?"

"Better? You wonderful little woman. It's an inspiration. I'll make my whole life a heroic poem for your sake."

"And Stan," she whispered, a little tearfully. "When folks say how wonderful your work is, I'll thrill warm inside because I'm the silent partner."

"And, Eve, dear, when folks say: 'Mr. Bird, how did you ever create such pictures?' I'll answer: 'May I present my wife?' "

CHAPTER XII.

Stanley spoke his contempt for curtains, so there were none. The windows thrown wide for summer, accepted the last slanting rays of a hot afternoon sun. All day the heat had been unbearable—the kind that makes a pearl necklace feel like a seal-skin coat.

At last a timid breeze began to blow across the city.

At the center table Eve was packing a pasteboard box. Stanley with his huge shoulders humped, stood watching her.

A glittering blue taffeta under clouds of chiffon was folded carefully and laid on top of something soft and pink.

"As much as I hate these fine clothes, Eve, I can't bear seeing you give them away," said Stanley, throwing himself down on the cot and burying his face in a cushion. "Seems exactly like dead people and a coffin."

Eve stopped her packing and came over to his side. "You mustn't think I want them ever any more, dear. I don't. You've shown me so much bigger and better things."

Stanley put his arms about her.

Love is so mighty and intangible that there never has been one word in any language big enough to express the emotion of a single thrill.

The courtship of Stanley and Evelyn (if their walking off to the justice could be called such) had been so

short and serious that they prided themselves on escaping the tom-foolery of sillier people.

Given a man and a woman together behind a locked door and it would take a power less great than passion to check the onslaught of precious nonsense.

The "Little Language" was most probably invented in the Garden of Eden. Ever since then each pathetic little soul has been struggling to tell some other pathetic little soul the same thing—"I love you."

Eve sat close to Stanley whispering lovelinesses of the "Little Language" into his ear. Stanley lay immovable and silent.

"I wouldn't wear silks and satins now that I know how they're made. Please, please, dear, don't feel blue. Think of my frivolous cousin Betty, twirling about in them. She'll be the happiest girl in Madison."

Silently they sat there with their arms about each other till the dark came down and obscured the last chimney pot in the gray district.

With his fingers automatically smoothing her hair back from her temples, he was probably dreaming great pictures: Dew-witches spun of silver drops; star-lighters made of wishes, and fairy godmothers wrought of coppery gold. Eve, happy in his nearness, was making mental lists of cabbages, beets, butter and eggs.

She got up from the couch rather suddenly and stretched her arms.

"Evelyn!" he said, sharply. He always called her Eve when he felt kindly. "Please don't jump up like that without telling me. It upsets me terribly—just as though you slammed a door in my face!"

"Why, Stan, dear, I'm awfully sorry. I got fidgety

sitting still so long and we've absolutely nothing here for supper and tomorrow's Sunday. There's heaps of marketing to do."

"We don't need anything tomorrow. Brown bread and butter is good enough for anybody!" He turned his face to the wall.

Eve sat down by his side and began to coax, "Stan, dear, you haven't had a breath of outdoors today. Come along—there's a good lamb., we'll go for a nice walk. All the hucksters are out on First Avenue and you know they make pictures in your mind—won't you come with me?"

He got up suddenly and splashed around in the bathroom. Eve found his hat for him, got the two big net bags down from the hook on the closet door and they started out together.

As they emerged into the street he asked petulantly: "Why don't you say something?"

"I was afraid of disturbing your picture, dear. You know you once told me that you like to get the first glimpse of the outside in silence."

"You've got a good memory for *some* things, Eve!" His tone cut her as deeply as though some one had slashed her flesh. She felt puzzled and achey about the heart as he dashed off toward the Public Library shouting back that he preferred that to peddler's carts.

"All right, dear, I'll come back for you when I've finished shopping."

On First Avenue she found her vegetable man and bought an enormous cabbage for five cents; two heads of lettuce (Stanley liked salads); Irish and sweet potatoes, and then at the butcher shop she got butter and second-quality eggs and sixteen cent's worth of hamburger—the

cheap kind made out of scraps, but it was fresh and tasted well fried quickly with plenty of fat till it was brown and crispy.

The two net bags were filled to bursting and the weight of them pulled cruelly at her shoulder bones, but she struggled on down the avenue to see if there was anything else cheap that she might buy.

"Rice!" she said to herself. "I forgot rice." She bought the broken kind at the disorderly little Jewish store at the corner. The broken kind was only four cents a pound and the whole rice was ten.

Stanley was sitting on the stone steps, having decided that libraries were stupid places with absolutely nothing in them to read.

The first thing he said to her when he took the bags out of her aching hands was: "What'd you buy so much for?"


"That isn't terribly much, dear; anyway I like to buy things when they're cheap. Our money will go so much farther."

At the mention of the word money, he glared at her as though he might have bitten her head off without a regret. "What are you always talking about money for?"

She smiled up at him and said with mock-serenity: "Because I'm learning to be a wonderful Haus-frau!"

"'Tisn't that. It's because you love money!" Stanley laughed as he swung both bags up to his shoulders.

"Careful! Eggs!" she cried excitedly, and Stanley jumped as though a bomb had been exploded under his nose.



"I wish you wouldn't raise your voice, Evelyn. Suppose the eggs do get smashed?"

"Well I apologize, but that would be throwing twenty-five cents away and twenty-five cents is such heaps of money."

Then, as usual, after a streak of unkindness, Stanley began to soften. He smiled down at her with a half-wink in his eye and said: "We'll have plenty of money. Don't you worry, little lady. You stick by me and I'll show you. I've got a whale of an idea for a new sort of illustrating and it'll go and go big. Don't you worry—time is all I need, just a little time for developing things."

And Eve, always resilient, felt calm again and the teary little choke in her throat relaxed. Laughing together, they skipped up the five flights of stairs to "The Nest."

Stanley sat at the window with a note book in his hand and sketched page after page, tearing them off and crumpling them into his pockets.

Eve pulled out the little folding table, straightened up the sides and set it daintily for supper.

She washed the salad, took the bottle of milk from under the cold water faucet, peeled the silver paper from the Snappy Cheese, boiled some Irish potatoes with their jackets on, fried the hamburger and invited Stanley to the feast.

Stanley whacked off four thick slices of brown bread. He liked the whole loaf displayed on the board. It looked homey and generous with "God Bless Our Home" carved around the edges.

"I'm gonne work tonight, Eve, dear. It's taken me a long time to plan out that comic series. Editors make me laugh—think they don't want anything too new!

Well, you watch 'em! I'll block out the first six tonight. Stuff ought to run along for months. Awfully good idea, Eve—you see I'm going to run comics that fit into the day of the week—nobody does that; they just have comics regardless of fit. 'Rainy Sundays,' can't you see 'em; 'Wash Mondays,' 'Ironing Tuesdays.' You see it won't only be about the home, but this damned regularity in people's households affects even business—you know it affects meals and comforts. Think of a woman having wash day at the end of the week instead of at the beginning—why it simply couldn't be done."

Stanley stuffed a large uncut lettuce leaf into his mouth, leaving a generous smear of good cottonseed oil and vinegar on his chin.

"I'll run these things for a living and we'll do the big stuff for fame."

Eve loved to hear him say "we." It made her feel warm and helpful to him and that was what she longed to be above everything else in the universe.

"That's fine, Stan. I'll trot into the other room and shut the door so you won't be disturbed." She felt so happy she was afraid she'd weep.

Stanley had made a million note-book sketches, but he hadn't even unpacked his drawing board since their marriage, and Evelyn, so afraid of not waiting for the psychological moment, had never alluded to the fact. It was her secret plan not to urge him, but just to be there to enthuse when the miracle arrived.

After supper she moved about in a seventh heaven of expectation, stacking the dishes in the sink as quietly as though they had been lined with plush.

She wouldn't wash up a thing; she wouldn't even turn

the cold water on the butter and milk; they could spoil for all she cared so long as Stanley was back on the road to work.

She got his drawing board, paper and pencils, ink and crayons out of the big box under the cot, and taking some thumb tacks, fastened a clean new sheet in place, then putting everything within easy reach, crept off into the other room and closed the door.

She sat low on the shoe box so that she might keep her ear to the key-hole. "Scratch, scratch," went the pen across the smooth surface of the paper.

"I knew I could do it—I knew it!" she whispered. Tears gushed down her cheeks and all the pent-up rivers of happiness in her soul, overflowed.

Toward midnight she heard him walk about the room and then throw himself down on the cot. He was resting. Stiff and creaky she rose from her long vigil and lifted the shoe box back into place on the closet floor.

She couldn't see what he was drawing through the key-hole, but she knew it was wonderful. She had never quite understood what the great dreams were, but the comics were clear enough, and the comics meant bread and butter and home assured. The *great dream*, she didn't believe he quite understood himself. It was just one of those fantastical somethings that one felt more than one could explain.

The whole sacred security of their lives together stretched out in one long shining road. She bowed humbly before its loveliness, almost afraid to cross the threshold and share it with her husband.

Once more she sang in her heart: "The Assyrians came down like a wolf on the fold!" but this time it was a song

of victory for Stanley. For her, too, because there was something glorious that awaited her when Stanley's success was assured. They had planned it all out together. They had bought its layette a thousand times out of the windows at Best's. They had even picked out its University and put it up at its father's fraternity. At last, thrilled with the fulfilment of every glorious hope in life, she tiptoed across the threshold to her husband.

Over the big white paper were hundreds of unintelligible scratches and Stanley was sobbing convulsively with his face buried in his arms.

A great unseen mallet struck Eve on the head, and that part of her brain that was meant for happiness, went senseless.

She sat down beside him and put her face close to his. She wanted to feel his tears—her own eyes were hot and dry. At least there is the chance of happy reaction when people still can cry.

"It wouldn't come! It wouldn't come!" he sobbed and she put her mother arms tightly about him and said: "It doesn't matter dear, it doesn't matter." But her voice sounded strange in her ears as though it came from a cavern somewhere far off.

"I'm a failure. I'll never do anything. Why didn't you let me alone where I was? I want to go away! I want to die!"

And she coaxed him up to the roof where he could see the great pictures again. Where the sky was the black breath of God; where the gray river squirmed and wriggled like the snake that drank the ocean; where the dark roofs were inquisitive giants with silly chimney-pot heads; where the whole world stretched out before them to be

conquered—the whole world, big and hard and inspirational.

At last he put his arms about her. "This'll pass, Eve—I'll show 'em yet. It's in me, girl, if I weren't just so afraid and nervous. You'll stay and help me, won't you, Eve—I need you."

"Yes, Stanley, darling. I'll stay and help if—if you need me."

CHAPTER XIII.

The summer spent itself and the red leaves, wind blown and frosted, fell in desolate little graves on the earth, but Stanley made no more pilgrimages to his drawing board.

Eve waited tensely by his side and while she waited something cold in her came back to the warmth of life. At first it was just an unconscious sneaking emotion that she wouldn't listen to. Then it burst into consciousness and she granted it the sunniest room in the storehouse of her brain.

At first her thoughts on the subject ran choppy "It won't interfere with him. I'll help just the same. I must. I thought it was dead. It isn't. If I had been able to make him succeed it might have died—but it's alive—all alive—my old ambition to do something! To be somebody!"

For the next few weeks she stole away by herself to public parks, to libraries, to her own room. Always with her nose buried deep in the pages of magazines even down to the sixth and seventh classes.

She tore plots apart hungrily and nailed them back together. She manufactured plots of her own parallel to those she discovered. She admitted and understood the human quality in the poorest story in the cheapest periodical.

In her secret excitement she forgot to be practical and

unhappy. All her gray heaven burst into reddening sunsets again.

And then one morning there appeared in Stanley's manner a peculiar poise. He went straight to his drawing board and early in the afternoon finished a cartoon and a five hundred word essay and disappeared with them into the street.

At five he returned with a kiss for Eve's lips and twenty-five dollars for her hand.

"That's what my soul storm did for me last summer, Eve. Sunned up the mouldy corners. Walter Colby, city life section, New York *American*. Told him I had to have the money now."

Eve hugged him joyously. "Stan, dear, if you'll do this every week we—we can have one and send it to Yale, too, when it's grown. Wouldn't it be wonderful?"

He held her close. "We ought to have one even if we can't afford it. That's the trouble with you, darling, you're too practical. You see too far ahead. These people in this neighborhood have one a year and they eat, too."

"But not lamb chops, darling!" She laughed, patting his cheek. "I have a lamb chop standard for children!"

"Well, you old sweet silly, they won't need lamb chops for at least two years and by that time we'll be—what do they call it—rolling in wealth. I've shown you I can make these fellows buy what I draw—let's not be too conservative."

"All right, if you'll sell one a week for a month I'll feel we're safe. Oh, Stan, dear, I want one so much, I don't mean one drawing, I mean twelve babies—as many as in

a whole orphan asylum, with all the other women looking on and envying me."

Eve affected a rollicking song and tucked her stories away again. They could wait. Everything could wait, now the miracle had happened. But deep within there arose a subtle controversy and the fiercer it raged, the gayer became her manner without.

In the dark rivers of silence that flooded each night she was at great pains to analyze her emotions. Did she really want to write? Well perhaps her ego did but her heart wanted quite another career. Why couldn't she have both? Most probably she could, but not just now with Stanley's success at the turning point. Wasn't she, after all, just a regular woman with the ordinary set of desires? Most probably she was. Wouldn't home and babies and a husband and the sing-song routine of motherhood satisfy her? She wasn't quite sure. Of one thing she was sure: Everything in her must be subordinated to Stanley. She must keep herself in readiness like the Jewish mothers who hoped to bring forth the Messiah.

But the miracle never happened again.

Eve's brain developed into a sort of duplex apartment. On the lower floor she kept the butter and eggs and cabbage and hamburger and along with them the fact that her thousand dollars was becoming negligible.

On the upper sunlit floor she kept her love for Stanley and the dream cradles for the twelve babies.

On the dark stairway between, she crouched and labored at her stories with all the joy gone out of the project.

Stanley struggled from one crimson mood into another. She tried gallantly to understand him, but each time the

light dawned some absurd black happening came down and eclipsed it.

For instance, just when she was sure that it was money that threw him into a fit of violent temper, she discovered that it wasn't money at all, but the milk that showed a diminishing amount of cream. Just when she divined that it was excessive amounts of food that he wanted, he went on a seven days' fast.

And harder than most hard things was the realization that she had the tread of an elephant. She was hurting Stanley at every step.

His brave flights of mysticism were always landing, bruised, on her sharp practicality.

She was confused and breathless over his "great idea," but concerning its meaning, she hadn't the faintest understanding.

All through the weeks she labored quietly. Her determination to be somebody had given way to the bare idea of saving Stanley and herself and their love from destruction. Money must come from somewhere and come very soon.

One afternoon, late in November, she fluttered around the flat like an excited Wyandote and pretending great delight, deposited her brood of six manuscripts on the couch beside her husband.

As usual he was preoccupied. He did not see her till she stooped down and kissed the tip of his nose.

"I wish to God you wouldn't happen to me like that, Eve. I've warned you a thousand times not to be abrupt with me!"

"You silly old boy, I was standing here at least one century and I thought you were aware of me. I've got

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a great, huge, hippopotamus surprise for you—one guess—no? Well, I've finished six stories all by myself. I've worked honestly and faithfully and humbly like you said I should, and now I want you to tell me they are good."

"Eve, I was planning a perfectly gorgeous picture, and you ripped my canvas right through the middle!"

"I'm terribly sorry, lamby-bird—do forgive me. I'll never, never do it again."

"That's what you always say, but you simply have no delicacy. You'd disturb God on the Judgment Day and then say, 'Sorry me Lord.'"

"Oh, honey, you're a chronic cyclone," said Eve, affecting a calm that she didn't in the least feel under the hurt.

He slammed the manuscripts to one side and strode up and down the room. Eve stood quietly in a corner where she wouldn't get stepped on and waited for the parade to pass.

Four paces this way, four paces that. He muttered to himself but included her, "We're damned hypocrites that's all I say. Who are we that someone else should dig the sewers for us? Why aren't we doing some of the dirty work?"

"But we are doing some of the dirty work," insisted Eve. "We cook and wash and iron and clean—that's heaps, isn't it?" She was mother enough to include him in her daily chores and he was man enough to accept her generosity.

"No!" he shouted. "It's not heaps! We're degenerate Romans, that's what we are. Sleeping and eating and making love up here for months. It's got to stop. I tell you I'm serious. I've got to accomplish something!"

"You'll never accomplish things if you continue to iso-

late yourself, dear. You can't sit on top of a sky-scraper and do things for the little people in the street below. You've got to be down on the sidewalk in touch with the little people."

"Eve, you are absolutely the most impossible person I have ever met. You never will understand that I won't go among people till I succeed."

"You're hungry, dear. I'll feed you and then please, will you look at my stories?"

He drank his hot chocolate—four cups—and then, with a face entirely expressionless, read through her manuscripts.

It wasn't so much that he found them impossible. It was the manner in which he told her the truth.

He laughed in her face; tore the pages through the middle and sent their white hopefulness spradling over the top of his drawings in the waste paper basket.

CHAPTER XIV.

"You're an example of the feminist movement, all right!" Stanley blurted out as a starter. "An absolutely ignorant female comes to New York, determined to conquer in the short story game—even pretends to conquer before she's sold a line. There's no use arguing the matter, women's brains and men's brains are different!"

Eve thought as she crouched there on a low stool looking at Stanley that women's brains were indeed different.

She felt a cold gray wave pass up her body and out as though her soul were escaping. The very next moment she was viewing the scene impersonally.

There was a quick movement on Stanley's part. His arms were about her and he held her so firmly that she ached—not her soul—just her body ached. Her soul was waiting outside.

"Eve, darling, tell me why I say such things? I'm a million sorries. I'd give anything to unsay that. Maybe the stories aren't so bad. I didn't mean to hurt you, only, dearest, you have such energy and you seem so unbreakable it nearly drives me crazy—will you forgive me?"

He kissed her eyes and nose and both the little warm spots behind her ears.

Of course, she loved him even afterwards. Women get these abnormal fixations on the first man. She felt a tender gratefulness toward him for giving her drawing materials and starting her off to see what she could do in that

line. But in her emotions she recognized the death of mate-love and the birth of what every married woman eventually descends to—mother-love.

Mere cruelty is never satisfactory to a cruel person. There must be the complete cycle of emotions. Anger, cruelty; tears and misery on the part of the person tortured; breast-rending apologies from the torturer, through which he emerges refreshed to his inmost soul for having done the gallant thing.

If Eve had had a single soul to talk to the hurt might have escaped in the telling, but there was no one. Marj and The Shepherd were married and living in a shack in the Adirondacks. Marj's lungs had suddenly gone wrong.

None of the kindly artist people ever came near "The Nest," as it was understood that Stanley hated people; that is, the genus that calls to spend the evening.

He loved folks in abstract sets like the Germans, the French, the Hindoos, the English, but anything more personal got on his nerves.

Perhaps Eve had a little talent for drawing as she had a little talent for most things, but with Stanley looking over her shoulder she couldn't make a straight line.

One evening in late December when her thousand was about gone and Stanley had been sputtering like an extinguishable catherine wheel, she slipped away from "The Nest" and wandered along the river front in the drizzling rain.

In the buildings all about, electric lights were blazing in courtesan defiance of the gray cloak that hung over the world outside.

Like animals in cages the poor foreigners of the district

were passing and repassing behind their closed and curtainless windows.

Framed in one was a mother with a baby warm up to her breast. In the next room was a man thrashing a woman. Eve looked up at them puzzled. How did *they* manage their lives? Were they very unhappy? Did it mend things up to beat each other or was the quiet nursing mother the better way?

She turned and looked over the rock wall into the river. The cold rain beat down on her head and ran in little streams from her fingers.

"It would be so easy!" she whispered, excitedly watching the drops splash like little skiffs, then flatten out and become one with the water below.

"I could mix with the river and be lost like the rain!" Then she drew back in a sort of shamed terror as she thought of Stanley, waiting through the years for her.

She lifted her shoulders squarely and sang the Tor-eador's song. She didn't know why, but somehow the great thump of the measure braved her heart. The rain, her tense throat, the sound of her own voice, brought back a sense of triumph—a certain sense of joy!

A man and a dog, coming out of the shadows of the Recreation Building, stopped in their journey and gazed intently at her.

Hatless, with her closed umbrella dragging limply in her fingers, she presented a picture of hopelessness that gave the lie to the beautiful bravado in her ringing voice.

Suddenly she stopped and covering her eyes with her left hand, sobbed in a reckless shaken way.

"Another one," murmured the man to himself, holding

the dog resolutely still as she turned and came in their direction.

Small wonder, with the wind and the rain in her face that she ran directly into him.

Ordinarily she would have fled, but tonight her protective instincts were numb and life, as she knew it, could hurt her no farther.

"Hadn't you better let me open your umbrella for you?" There was a sweet, tempered tone in his voice that women love. Eve stopped before it, comforted as though some one had tucked her into bed and put a nice hot brick at her feet.

"No, thank you, I want the rain to beat down on my head. Feels so nice and cool—you're doing the same thing yourself!"

"But I'm a man!"

Eve felt suddenly angry that this stranger should dare to discriminate. She answered rather sharply: "And that's so different, is it?"

"Only, my child, in the length of the hair."

Eve laughed in spite of her gloom. "I thought you were going to tell me that women are fragile vessels and that they have no logic and that their brains weigh less than men's."

"Not at all. Brain has no sex and judging by what women go through from the cradle to the crematory, mere man is no match for them in this business of pain."

The man was young with a middle-aged kindliness in his tone. Eve noticed even in that rain-veiled light that he was tall and dark like a Mexican and his body was heavy without being fat. His dog kept jumping up and

pawing at his hip much as an eager child tries to gain the attention of an indifferent mother.

"Would you mind telling me who you are?" asked Eve.

"I'm the Philosopher Man," he answered, "and quite without name. I have seen you with the big blonde husband and always there was something hurt about you. Sometimes in the way you drooped your shoulders; sometime in your half-shut eyes; always somewhere, something was hurt. Tonight I saw you walking by the river and rather longing for the secrets that can only be had from the under side, so I talked it over with my dog and he said: 'By all means go to her!'"

"Your dog was very kind, Mr. Philosopher Man—I am hurt."

"Everyone is hurt—it comes from being too certain about life. Life won't permit folks to be too certain about it."

"But it's horrible not being certain about things—how can one build up the future without being certain about things?"

"The future doesn't matter—that is, one can't permit it to matter," and he led her over to the stone river-wall and sat her down beside him. The dog sniffed around all the puddles, then leaped up on the wall and crept under his master's left arm.

"Why, I live entirely in the future, Mr. Philosopher Man. Is that wrong? You're so much wiser and older, please tell me what you think. I'm willing to accept anybody's viewpoint tonight rather than live any longer with my own."

"It is very silly, my dear, to live in the future. The Fates get angry and play practical jokes on you. I've been

through all the phases and life cannot hurt me any more. Once I had what I thought was a great dream—I wanted to set life free, but it seems that life had a greater dream and has set me free.”

Eve looked up at his fine calm face and wondered if by any chance this man could be Max Beerbohm’s Happy Hypocrite. She would find out. If he were, then she, too, would seek out Mr. Aeneas, the fashionable mask-maker, and order a mask that would be fine, calm and impenetrable. It would indeed be a great comfort not to have one’s soul showing all the time like a slovenly petticoat.

There was nothing whispery about him, but his voice was controlled as though he had to be discreet about his confidences.

He took her hand quite non-committally. “Again my dear, it’s this frightful business of youth that makes you suffer so. I have to look down a long line of years to you—I’m forty. I used to have wild impulses, sudden angers, great Socialistic schemes, Anarchistic upheavals, but they never work out in the mind of any one man. I saw the commonwealth just around the corner and it wasn’t because I was out of a job, either.”

“Most of the Socialists *are* out of a job,” ventured Eve.

“Very naturally, my child. Successful, normal people never have time to think about what’s wrong with the world; they only have time to make the world wrong.”

“I’m getting cold, Mr. Philosopher Man, don’t you think we’d better walk?”

They splashed around in the pools of water up and down the cobbled street. Suddenly he laughed a little friendly laugh.

“Tell me why you laugh, Mr. Philosopher Man?”

"I was laughing at all the people in the world who are trying to settle other people's problems. Now you're most likely trying to settle your husband's problem. Aren't you an impudent child? *His* problem is *his* and *your* problem is *yours* and even if this weren't the case, the only way one ever can help another is by just sitting about on call."

"Then, do you really think I should go ahead and develop myself regardless of him? It sounds rather dreadful—I thought my constant attention was necessary to my husband."

"Most probably not. People hinder each other dreadfully, but they seldom help. That's why each person ought to live alone. Thrusting the machinery of one's life on another is a sort of lesser immorality."

"Then you're not married, Mr. Philosopher Man?"

"Oh, everyone is married, you know. If not to a wife and children then to ideas and obsessions."

"But children, I mean real children?" Eve asked the question with a tenderness that women use when there is a baby in the next room. "Mr. Philosopher Man, have you any really truly children?"

"Oh, perhaps I have, and perhaps I only have brain children," he answered. And you—do you want real children?"

"Oh, yes—children—they are a sort of glorious hope of mine, but they were much realer before I married than they are now. I think principally now about *not* having them."

"That's the same with all virtuous women. They long for children, but they really want a man, however, they don't know it. Wouldn't be quite decent you know and longing for children is entirely pure."

CHAPTER XV.

Oozing water from every inch of her clothing and from every strand of her hair, Eve dashed up the tenement stairs and into the apartment.

The first thing that Stanley said to her when she entered, dripping, through the doorway was: "What I want to be is a damned capitalist!"

She stood in the little bathroom peeling off one garment after another. "Sounds awfully interesting, Stan," she called back, "but how do you square that with your views on Socialism—gimme my bath robe."

"Well, all I can say is that under the present system anybody who isn't a capitalist is a damned fool. What I mean is, vote the Socialist ticket if you vote at all, but accumulate all the dirty stuff you can. Nobody'll listen to you if you're poor." He shoved the bath robe through the door at her.

She came in tying the cord around her waist and threw her exhausted self across the cot. "Well, honey, I've always felt that way, but it's sort of a shock coming from you."

The door bell rang. Eve reached out and pressed her finger across his lips and whispered: "Milk-man. Don't answer. Can't possibly pay him."

The bell rang again, viciously. There was a piece of white paper slipper under the door and the person, whoever it was, stumped off down the stairs.

They waited a safe moment, then Stanley darted across and picked up the sheet.

He stood there bewildered, "It's an eviction notice, Eve!"

She tried hard to steady her throat. "We're over a week behind, dear."

He sank into a chair, groaning and muttering and in his voice was a mixture of anger and cruelty and hatred and terrible pity for himself and terrible pity for her.

Then heavy silence crept over "The Nest" and Eve lay for a long while quietly looking over the advertisements in the *Times*.

Suddenly she bolted up. "Stan, I'm going on the stage! Tomorrow morning I'm going to visit every office in this city." Through all her being vibrated new hope and new joy.

"I'll be doggoned if you will!" said Stanley, jerking the paper out of her hands. "I'll get a job. You've contributed your thousand and you won't put in another cent!"

Long ago she had ceased being hurt by his tempers. It only made her feel more sorry for him.

She asked quietly: "What kind of a job can you get, dear?"

"I don't know. I'll look up and down the list and find something!"

She knew he wouldn't, but she answered: "That would be great!"

He grew happy again. His face lighted with the magic of a million new ideas. "Then we'll get along fine—I'll draw on the side. I'll get a job if it's only cracking stones."

Eve crept over and sat on the arm of his chair. "Dearest, I've got something to tell you that I've been hiding. We

still have twenty dollars—but just twenty. I was afraid to pay the rent—the hot tears smarted in her eyes. “You go down right away and pay it. We’ve got to live somewhere—we can’t go out into the street.”

He put his big arms gently around her and wiped her tears away with his handkerchief. “Eve, darling, don’t cry—it’ll be all right. It’s the best thing that ever happened to me. I’ve been dreaming like a fool. This’ll give me my chance to show you I *am a man*. I won’t look for a job. My job’s right here at my drawing board. I’ll make a schedule for work and by Heck! the dreams are over. This time I’ll stick!”

He left her side and began to rule off a piece of paper.

After twenty minutes he handed the completed scheme to her. It was beautifully lettered and fantastic illustrations decorated the top and bottom of the sheet.

6 a. m.—Rise—Bath—Short walk—Breakfast.

7 till 10—Work on comics.

10 till 12—Lettering for some advertising office.

Luncheon and walk.

1 till 5—Illustrating for some publishing house.

Recreation—supper.

After supper—Designing.

Eve read it with heightened interest. “That’s a peach of an idea, Stan. If you can stick to that you’ll be a capitalist before you know it.”

“Stick!” His tone was scornful. “Maybe you think I won’t stick—you’ve got as much confidence in me as you have in a flea—I’ll show you!” He strode angrily into the other room and pinned the schedule over his bed.

Long ago Eve had made up her mind that Stanley should never accuse her of forcing him into unpleasant situations. She hated women like the heroine in *Martin*

Eden. It was criminal to beg a husband or a lover to get a job when his soul was developing.

When Stanley came back, Eve pressed his cheeks with the flat palms of her hands. "I do believe in you, dear," she said. "I know you are a great man. I knew it the first time I saw you."

"Now, that's the way I like to hear you talk. Helps more than anything. You've got to believe in me even if the whole world refuses to be such a fool."

"But I'm not a fool, darling. In all my dreams I see you doing big things. Something has been wrong. Perhaps I have been wrong—I don't quite know."

"Not your fault, dear, except perhaps that your energy scares me a little. It's all my fault, but if you'll just believe in me this one time more I'll prove things to you!"

Eve pressed her body up close to him. "I do believe in you, Stanley—I do believe in you! I'll get along on the wee bittest of money—you know I can, if you'll just put down on paper those magical things you have in your brain. Will you, darling—will you?"

The beauty in his eyes lifted her up out of fear, out of poverty, out of everything that was low and sordid and hateful and once more she stood on the peaks by his side, ready to brave for his sake, all of life and surely all of death.

But after the rent was paid and the lights were out and Stanley was sleeping quietly under his scheme for the morrow, all the things the Philosopher Man had said to her began to eddy around in her brain in new little whirlpools of thought. She lay tensely awake. His voice came back to her. His charming, quiet voice. "You are a capable human being. Surely there is something big that you can do. Why should you throw your ambition under the

heel of anybody, no matter how much you love. Of course your stories did seem to be bad and your drawing worse, but is one's own man a fair critic? Go out! Breathe! Learn! Live!"

At six o'clock the next morning Stanley's ninety-eight cent alarm went off. He picked it up and slung it all the way across the room. It buzzed with life for a moment, then died.

Eve crawled to the foot of the bed and slipped to the floor.

"Whatche getting up for, Eve; it's midnight? Don't you ever feel tired?" He growled and turned over.

"It's six, dear, and I've got lots to do today. Your scheme says you are getting up at six, too. Better come and eat brekky with me."

"Brekky!" he muttered, "My God—baby-talk—uh!" He shuddered and hid his head under the pillow.

She bathed and came back into the room. "Stan, honey, you'd better get up. You'll be all mad at yourself if you don't get up when you said you would."

"I'll start the scheme working at seven. I was a nut to figure on six o'clock—lemme alone."

She drank a bottle of milk, dressed herself very carefully, and slipped out into the early morning world to find her niche.

CHAPTER XVI.

In a classified telephone directory she looked up theatrical agencies; she wrote them down in a long list and started on her rounds.

There must be something in well-set-upness. In one big agency where the crowd was so thick that standing room had given out, Eve leaned against the wall—waiting.

At last the manager opened his sanctified door. He bowed agreeably to some, shook his head negatively to many, then catching sight of Eve, motioned her to follow him.

He stood her where the light would fall cruelly on her face and asked: "Any experience?"

"Only in an amateur way."

"What do you want?"

"Anything!"

He was a big English-looking person with curly hair parted directly down the middle. His face had a wrinkled kindness about it and when he laughed it was not so much at her as at all her kind.

"Of course, you know there are a million of your brand floating about the offices; you know that most plays are cast in July and August and that it is now January; and of course you know that there are some wonderful actresses out there in that waiting room that haven't had any breakfast?" He said it all in a well-meaning, fatherly way.

Eve's heart thumped. True she had had breakfast, but she wasn't quite sure about luncheon herself. Her breath came so fast as she stood there facing him that she felt it

cold on her front teeth. "That—that may be all true, but—I—I came late—if there wasn't something about me that was unusual, why did you call me in first?" Her words came thin as though they had been squeezed through a very narrow place.

He pointed to a chair. "Please sit down; the very fact that you are frank enough to ask such a question, answers you—you are unusual."

Eve's legs gave way and she sank rather heavily on the hard golden-oak chair.

"You see," he continued, "the stage is getting to be more and more a matter of type. Just now I need a dark woman like you to play a rather fine part as an organ grinder's wife. I'll give you a note to the producer, but I'm afraid your mere lack of technique will bar you out."

"Oh, don't tell him, Mr. Sumner—you are Mr. Sumner, aren't you? I'm not stupid; maybe I can do it. At least let him find out for himself."

Mr. Sumner laughed. "Oh, he'll find out all right!"

"Take a note," he said to his stenographer, and when it was finished and signed he handed it to Eve with, "Go over and see what happens."

The Broadway manager was the wrong type of Jew. A frightful little toad, as wide as he was high. He smoked a huge cigar and squinted at Eve through jets of smoke that encircled his head. If it hadn't been her business to be gracious, she might have slapped his face.

"Well, she looks the part, don't she, boys?" croaked the Jewish frog, reaching up and patting Eve familiarly on the back. "Here! read the part. Go on, Jenkins, and be the organ grinder."

How Eve struggled through to the end was a mystery to her. She skipped lines. She read other people's ques-

tions. The Jewish frog glared and jumped at her, but by some miracle she found herself at last down on the street with the typewritten part in her hands. She had been directed to learn as much as possible before the rehearsal at the Brunswick Theatre the next morning.

Up the steps to Mr. Sumner's office she stumbled, wading through an entirely new but just as hungry looking mob.

"Where do they come from, Mr. Sumner—such a pathetic lot," said Eve, sitting down beside him in his private office again.

"My dear child," answered Mr. Sumner, "that's the great, unsolvable mystery. They come to New York in July and they hang on till February with their sad-looking Fourteenth Street suits and their little Woolworth rose pinned on a last year's turban. They trudge up here day in and day out as long as there is any hope. Where they live, no one knows. How they live, no one knows. In March they disappear, nobody knows where. Perhaps back to the farm; perhaps into some great lady's kitchen. Every July, back they flock with the same weary look and the same insatiable ambition. Sometimes one doesn't return. Nobody ever finds out why."

"It's a very dreadful business, Mr. Sumner. I should think you'd hate it."

"I do in a way because I've never succeeded in hardening myself. I'm glad those Kikes gave you this chance, but don't bank on it—lots of things can happen even to a Broadway star."

"On the way home Eve sneaked into a pawn shop and left her gold watch and chain. It must have been a fairly good watch. It brought her ten dollars.

On First Avenue she invested in a quart of milk, a

fourth of butter, some brown bread and a dozen of the best eggs. Everything in her was pounding with happiness as she climbed the stairs with her bundles.

It was brilliant noon. Stanley was still asleep in bed. As she stood there looking at him, she wondered why she wasn't furious—but somehow she wasn't. Something had happened in her own life. The thing that she had come to New York to do was looming up big right in the road ahead. To be sure it wasn't short story writing, but all the arts were sisters and one could still write short stories when one was an old decrepid in a wheel chair.

She stumbled against a table and Stanley turned over and looked at her. "For the love of God where have you been?" he asked, his fine blonde hair shadowing the blue of his eyes. Eve noticed that he was paler and more tired looking than usual.

She walked over and sat down on the edge of the bed. There was no kiss as there surely would have been before yesterday. Not in the least because she was angry, but because she felt singularly detached and detachment makes one forget.

"I've had a wonderful morning!" she breathed enthusiastically.

"Yes!" he snapped, "you always have wonderful mornings. That cruel vitality of yours would make you have wonderful mornings even if you were forelady in the cranberry bogs of Jersey! What? Where?"

Eve stared at him a moment as one stares at a strange specimen in a museum. The anger in his voice had nipped the freshness of her adventure. She proceeded cautiously.

"Well, I decided last night that as long as story writing and drawing had failed, I'd do what I said I'd do—stage."

Stanley sank back on his pillow and laughed till a fork

that was poisoning gingerly on the stove in the other room, fell to the floor. "Stage! You couldn't get a job if you stood around feeding lollipops to the office boy for the next century."

"But I've got a job," she said, calmly, producing her part and laying it on the bed beside him.

Stanley sat up with a jolt. He fingered the blue covered booklet and then not to be outdone muttered: "Well, you might get canned and if you don't, you'll have to rehearse eight weeks without a cent and the play might last one night."

"Well, Stan, the main thing is getting started. They want me to memorize as much as I can today. Rehearsals begin tomorrow morning."

There was something catching about the way in which Eve went to work on her part. Stanley found himself infected and by evening he was reading her cues and bossing her about as though he were the almighty Ben Rimo himself.

Something of their old sense of play flooded back over them. Stanley got out a box of make-up that he had used somewhere back in his college life and proceeded to show Eve the tricks. He made her up so exquisitely that when he finished he couldn't resist kissing most of it off.

At eight-thirty Stanley was queuing her when the door bell rang. Lately they had got out of the habit of answering bells but somehow it buzzed so persistently that Eve pressed the button. It was a messenger with a typewritten note from the Jewish frog. It ran quite formally: "Please return part by messenger as your services will not be available."

When that blue coated boy left, he took with him the very last light of the heavens. Eve sat rigid for a mo-

ment, then she collapsed into a sobbing heap with all the sorrows of all the women of all the ages descending upon her.

She looked so little and crushed that Stanley straightened into a Brobdingnag.

He took her in his arms. He whispered great hopeful things. He manufactured fairy tales. He kissed her nose and her chin and her ears.

"Eve, dear, don't work. Be just my wife. You wanted only that before we married—stick it out. It'll be a paying investment in time. Dearest, as sorry as I am, I'm glad it happened. You're too dominant; too whirl-windy; too violent. You taper off a little and try to fit into my slowness, then I'll feel encouraged and get faster—see? That's the way those things work with married people. I'll take care of you, and you know I will."

She couldn't speak. She crowded up close to him, beaten like Marj—poor little Marj, the night of the artist's ball. She saw it all very plainly again. Marj, too, had crowded up close to The Shepherd on the way home in the taxi. Marj had been crushed. Well, there were other women who were crushed. What difference did it make whether one was drink-shattered or world-shattered? One was shattered just the same. And a shattered woman wants her man's arms as tight about her as she can get them.

Romancers are at great pains to tell about the crucial moment when something snaps. Nothing ever really snaps. The soul is simply shifted to another plane of living—usually a much lower and less interesting plane.

That is exactly what happened to Eve. The next morning she went out and pawned the balance of her jewelry. She paid the rent for a week to come and settled with the milk man. She went marketing, and one hour later,

ascended the tenement stairs with her hands full of the usual line of cheap vegetables. Her step was a trifle heavy and her face perhaps a shade paler, but that was because she was no longer Eve Kerwin, but Mrs. Stanley Bird. She had decided upon losing her identity.

CHAPTER XVII.

Much the same as one applies for the job of cooking or washing, Eve answered an ad for a typist at eight dollars a week. She knew no short-hand, but, after all, that wasn't necessary at a manuscript copying place and she could fly along on the machine amazingly with two fingers.

There were eleven applicants and Miss Spitz, the boss, sat on the other side of a glass door marked "Private," and interviewed one girl at a time.

All of them, either very gay or very cynical, straggled by. Miss Spitz poked her head out at Eve and said: "Come in!"

The door slammed.

"Any experience?" asked Miss Spitz.

"Some," said Eve.

"Shorthand?"

"No."

"Doesn't matter. Which machine?"

"Underwood."

Miss Spitz, the verbal economist, pressed a button and said sternly to the girl who entered: "Underwood!"

"Take dictation!" said Miss Spitz, holding out a sheet of yellow paper to Eve.

Choking and dizzy with fear of this narrow-eyed, stiff-collared business woman, Eve dropped into the chair.

She had never taken dictation before. She felt Miss Spitz's eyes burning a hole in her middy sleeve as she sat there thumping the slippery little keys.

Miss Spitz jerked the paper out of the machine and

looked at it for a minute. "All right!" she said, "Go in there and pick out a table. You're not very swift, but you'll earn eight dollars. If you learn to write faster I'll pay you by the word. Don't waste paper and don't talk during office hours. Don't get interested in the story. Copy! That's all. Do it mechanically!"

Somehow, Eve struggled out to the main office and the forelady gave her a table and some paper and a short story manuscript to copy and she went to work.

The two fingers that she used for the job pounded rapidly along but somehow she was eternally striking L for P and F for R and so on along the line. Every moment she had to stop and rub out. The carbon copy had entirely escaped her solicitations. It was smeared and smudged from top to bottom. The forelady tore it and the first sheet into a million pieces and threw them into the waste-basket.

"Start over!" she said, angrily, "and it might pay you to go a little slower and use all your fingers—learn now as well as any other time."

Stung and ashamed Eve rolled the two fresh sheets into the machine. Slowly and laboriously, using all her fingers, she completed that first page again and this time without a visible mistake. That was probably the secret of success for her—using all her fingers, even all her mental fingers and using them carefully.

That dreadful first page! She knew every word of it. It burned in her brain like some long ago memorized poem of her childhood. It became one of those things that she could never forget.

When the noon hour arrived, the girls undid greasy little bundles and sat back chewing. Eve was hungry, but she dared not spend any of those last few cents in her

pocket. Putting on her coat and hat with the air of dining at Whytes, she wandered down into Nassau Street.

One time she had seen cattle squeeze through a great windy gulch in the Rockies and this reminded her of it. The narrow street was heaving with frosty-breathed people, pushing and forcing and stepping on each other in a violent hurry to get somewhere. They were so fearfully like the cattle in the great windy gulch in the Rockies that Eve unconsciously cocked her ears to hear them low.

And then the restaurant windows bewildered her. She was achingly hungry. Why was it people got hungry all over again every day? Why hadn't we been created, as some great person once suggested, with radishes and onions and beets growing on our hands instead of fingers? It might not be so attractive to look at, but it would preclude forever the humiliating necessity for money to buy things. She was beginning to be furious about it when some one grabbed her arm and hugged up close to her.

"Hello, there, you new one!" It was the little red-headed Jewess who sat at the next table up in the office, "Sunning yourself?"

They both laughed because the sun even at noon had very little opportunity of showing himself off in that dim alley-way.

"How do you like it as far as you've gone—pretty punk, ain't it?" said the little girl, nudging Eve, familiarly.

"Well, it isn't as leisurely as the Waldorf Astoria, but I guess it'll improve."

"No, it don't improve; that 's just the trouble. It goes on and on just like this. There's only one way for a steeno to improve her job and that's to get another."

"Is Miss Spitz very hard to get on with?" asked Eve

as they emerged into Franklin Square, where a youth was holding forth on Socialism.

"Oh, gee! Is Miss Spitz hard to get on with? I wonder!" gasped the little red-head. "Why, she's a regular devil! But she's got a right. You know about her?"

"No, I don't know a thing on earth about her. Just answered an ad and she took me."

"Well, she came over here from Roumania when she was just a kid and worked in sweat shops till she brought over the whole damn family. Course she had to educate her sisters and brothers so she worked herself nearly blind—ain't her lamps awful? Now they're all educated; college and everything and she's taking a short story course on Saturday mornings at Columbia. They say she's gonna write great stuff about what she's went through in the land of the free and the home of the brave!"

Just then the street speaker yelled out: "The land of the free and the home of the brave!"

The little red-headed Jewess laughed: "Gee, listen at him snitch my rhetoric!"

On the way back to the office the red-head held forth: "You see, Miss New One, that's how it goes. It's just like the street speaker says: you can't work for no one else and get a square deal!" and then they were swallowed up by the great entrance of their building.

The afternoon dragged like a surfeited cobra. Eve was hungry. She was cold. Her spine ached and one spot in her shoulder-blade dug painfully. Her eyes wandered back and back to the clock on the wall. If it had not been for the golden pendulum that swayed eternally below the gilt-trimmed face, Eve would have been willing to swear in court that the hands were not moving.

At five-thirty she put on her things mechanically, came

down in the elevator and dragged herself out into the street. Then suddenly inside her being, something new was born. A sudden joy vibrated through the throng toward her. A sudden thrill arose from the shoving and pushing and jamming. All these scurrying people were the machinery that made the wheels go round. Because of her one day in Miss Spitz's office, she, too, was the tiniest of tiny cogs.

How were men and women ever contented with the quiet things of home when just forty minutes away, was working, this thriller.

She rushed up the elevated steps with the sense of something triumphant awakening in her brain.

After all, making literature in a garret wasn't living! The business world was the only live thing in existence. The starving scribbler in the garret was merely a poorly paid cataloguer of the things that the person of business really experienced. Business! No wonder men dropped dead at the ticker! No wonder J. P. Morgan was greater than Nero! Business! Business! The romance of business!

CHAPTER XVIII.

Even standing up in the smelly elevated train gave Eve an extra thrill. Back through her being surged that sense of oneness with humanity of which the isolated life in the tenements had robbed her.

All the way over Fifty-Seventh Street the history of Miss Spitz was passing in a glorious pageant across her consciousness. Miss Spitz had been successful because she had done the nearest thing to her right hand. That was the way women always did. No inspiration, no talent. Just a dull solving of the practical mysteries of life.

Then there was a lot to be said about working downtown where the chairs were not so comfortable and the book shelves farther away than arm's reach.

That was Stanley's difficulty. She saw him through the hard eyes of Miss Spitz. He was out of touch with the hurry. He was a poor boss for himself. He ought to be under someone's whip hand.

"A little talent! That's the precious thing!" she thought to herself. "Stanley's talent is too great—he can never get hold of a small enough portion of it to make it useful."

She plodded along. "I'm so glad I'm ordinary. I'm so glad I'm untalented. I'm so glad I'm just a mother person with a washwoman's brain—now I know I'll do something big!"

Then she bought some potatoes and brown bread and butter and hurried along toward the tenements.

Reaction arrived. It was agonizing to climb the stairs.

Once inside the door, she flung herself down on the cot without speaking.

Stanley came in from the bed-room with a worried look in his eyes. "Where have you been all day, little Pussy-cat?" he asked, kissing her cheek a dozen times.

"Took a job typing," she answered, without opening her eyes.

He clenched his fists angrily, "You give it up!"

"I will, honey, when you get started—but—we must live. Will you put that kettle on and make me a cup of tea, please."

Stanley was excited. He banged the kettle nerve-rackingly against the enamelled sink and rattled the china cup against its saucer.

"I'll get started tomorrow," he said. "I won't have you working for me!" He struck match after match and allowed them to blow out while the gas was escaping.

"Did you work today, dear?" she asked, taking the fifth lighted match out of his hands.

There was a slight explosion as the flame met the escaping gas, and Stanley jumped nervously.

"Wish you'd quit nagging me about working. I don't want to be asked all the time. Anyway I slept too late. The scheme's no good. If I oversleep it upsets me so I can't go on the way I've planned. I'd just rather try again without any scheme."

"I think that's a fine idea," she said, rising to rinse out the tea-pot that he was holding helplessly in his hands. He seemed to know there was something he was to do with it, but what that something was, he was unable to imagine.

She flopped down exhaustedly again. "Cut some bread and put the butter and milk on the table, please."

"I drank all the milk—I'm sorry—shall I run out and get some more, dear?"

"No, thanks, Stan, tea's all right without it if you don't look. Water's boiling, dear, take it off."

Stanley burnt his fingers on the hot pot and stood there helplessly blowing on them. Eve darted up and poured the water over the tea leaves.

This was the climax only of the first day. By the end of the week she had learned to sit relaxed instead of in a knot; she had learned not to hear the other machines; she had learned to work evenly and with a certain system.

All the way home in the train she crushed that first pay envelope in her hands. It was a matter of glorious excitement to her. Eight soiled one dollar bills. At least there's one nice thing about soiled bills—they buy just as much as crisp new ones.

"Stan, dear, what would you do about those poor girls down at Miss Spitz's? They struggle around from eight till five-thirty for eight dollars a week and all of them have indigestion from the stale lunches they cart from home. None of us can afford restaurants, but if we had some way of heating a little milk or making a cup of hot tea, we might at least keep our insides warm."

Stanley, who was always seething with ideas became excessively excited. "Well," and he sat down with paper and pencil as he always did when he was talking seriously. "Seems to me there are several ways out." He began to make diagrams. "Number one is to ask Miss Spitz to put in a gas burner. Number two is to go to the agent of the building and ask for the use of some unoccupied office for a lunch room."

"Whatche drawing, dear?" asked Eve, leaning over in

admiration of the exquisite curves that were coming rapidly into being on the paper.

"Oh, this is a thing I've had in my mind for a long time—sort of human-fairy woman. See, I'd like to make her the most impossibly beautiful creature in the world and still a mother-thing like you, but this isn't quite it!" He tore the sheet through the middle.

"Oh, please, don't!" cried Eve, grabbing it before he had destroyed it completely. "Stan, dear, why don't you sit down and finish something. You know I believe if you'd finish just one big splendid thing, you'd be able to keep right on. It's because you never finish anything that you lose courage. I've done four thousand words on the typewriter today. I'm getting quite expert and you don't know what a sense of fulfillment came when I handed in those sheets. Why it was hard and wonderful like bearing a baby. Won't you try to finish a picture and have it ready to show me tomorrow night when I come home?"

"I'll finish two, you little lamb-pie!" He put his arm about her and they were very happy all through the evening.

Eve began to keep from Stanley little things like the paying of rent and the pawning of jewelry. What was the use? He couldn't help it and his mood was so much happier when she allowed him to forget. She almost saw him back at work producing bigger things than in those olden days, referred to by him with so much dignity.

"You know, Eve, when I used to do comics for the *Herald* I was as poor as the devil on sixty a week because I was always saving so I could quit."

She sat on his lap and nestled her weary head in that

dark warm place under his ear. "And what did you do when you had a lot saved?"

"I went to the South Sea Islands and slept on the sand till my money was gone; then I came back and went to work again."

She could feel his heart beat faster. He took a long breath and continued. "I did that stunt four separate times, but the fourth time something happened and when I got back I couldn't get to work and it's been that way ever since." He pushed her gently away from him, and walking into the other room, shut the door against her.

In a few minutes she crept in and threw herself on the bed beside him. "Don't worry, dear, it will all come right some day. You've had a beastly hard time with these twitchy nerves of yours, but lots of folks go through the same thing—I feel it in my bones—good times are near."

He reached out and put his arm about her without lifting his face from the pillow. Great man tears squeezed through and dripped off and made reproachful patches on the white slip.

"Come on back in the other room, Stan, and let's talk about those stenographer girls. We didn't come to any conclusion."

She pulled him up pretending not to see the red eyeballs and the quivering lips, but they were the hardest of all the hard things she was trying to bear.

"Miss Spitz is a dog and you have to be to make money out of other people's labor," he said.

"I don't believe you do, dear. I can imagine an office run on a co-operative plan where everybody would make money and be happy."

He laughed sarcastically. "Well, you just try it, Miss School of Philanthropy."

"That's what I intend to do! I've thought it all out. I'm going to stick around there till I learn every trick of the trade and then I'm going to start a co-operative manuscript copying plant of my own."

"Well, I wish you luck. To begin with, most of those girls are a stupid bum lot." Stanley filled his charred pipe and puffed away with his feet on the gas stove.

"I know they are, Stan. There isn't a girl in that place now that isn't looking for another job. They all say "Sticking don't get you nothing," but I for one am inclined to think they are wrong—they're all so hopeless."

"You'd be, too!" he snapped, "if you'd been born in a slum and fed on slop all your life."

"Why, dear, I'm not blaming them. I'm trying to think out some way of benefiting them."

"You'll never do it."

"I'll bet you twelve kisses to one that I will!"

After Stanley went to sleep Eve slipped away down the tenement stairs for a breath of air under the stars. It was very late, but The Philosopher Man was still striding up and down the river front, this time with two little dogs. He took both of Eve's hands and kissed them reverently.

Somehow he never offered advice. Any fool can do that. He just unearthed facts about the world and permitted you to make up your own mind.

Their shoes thumped on the cobbles as they walked back and forth below the play-ground block.

At last Eve asked: "What do you think about there just being one head to the family, Mr. Philosopher Man?"

"I think that when it becomes necessary to decide upon who is to hold the job there is no longer any use for the

decision. In monarchies it is usually the weakest person who holds the sceptre, but in households it is invariably the strongest. It doesn't do to talk about it much though, because sceptres have a horrid way of being pointed."

"Do you think, Mr. Philosopher Man, that a household is ever happy when a woman holds the sceptre?"

"No."

"But what if the man isn't strong enough to hold it?"

"Then that is a very sad household, indeed."

CHAPTER XIX.

Gradually Eve's life divided itself into two distinct emotions: One was workmanlike and cruelly exact; the other was an easy going game of make-believe. A game that she and Stanley were playing together. A pretend game that Stanley was preparing a monstrous decorative work. A work so fantastic and stirring that the whole artistic world would eventually stand before it in hang-jawed astonishment. A great pretend game in which Stanley became sweet-natured and content with being cared for. A great game that Eve said good-bye to every morning before going out into the work-a-day world to develop a man's size brain.

To the bed post hung a little red pocket-book. All that Eve could spare from the household was slipped into it and money was never discussed.

The struggle in Stanley had sunk into a deep sleep. Excepting for hundreds of notes that he was continuously making, one would never have guessed that there had been any struggle.

Always at night there was happiness and enthusiasm in Stanley's greeting. He had met a queer old woman in the park; she had allowed him to sketch her picture; he had added more notes and the old woman's face to his great book that would be called "The City;" he had eaten his luncheon in a Yorkville restaurant and sketched leering monsters through smoked breath as they had never been sketched before.

And then Eve would cook the supper that she had

carried home in her arms and they would eat like very gay children. After supper she would press his clothes and clean his fractious ties that always dipped into things, and wash the dishes and he would dry them and put them away, then she would tell him with a great show of pride how his ideas were being worked out down town in her office. The hours were now from nine till five; there was a permanent lunch room for all the girls in the building; there was an envelope for complaints; there was a special light just in the right position over each desk. All this exchange of conversation made them very happy and they loved each other increasingly and neither ever spoke on the subject of the great hurt.

Spring lasted only a moment and June came with roses and thrills and then in a breath, December again and Eve remembered with a treacherous shock that they had been married two years.

The Twinge had been trying to assert itself for months, but Eve had no time for it. Now with her salary raised to fifteen a week and her responsibilities greater and her actual work less, the Twinge became insistent.

All day long in the alluring rush of things, she quieted its bullying, but in the black stillness of the night, it perched on the foot of her bed and shook its hideous fist in her face.

The thing that it said the oftenest and the thing that cut the deepest was that she was willfully ruining her husband's career.

She grew very indignant at the Twinge one day and insisted that she was supporting Stanley so that he might develop his great ideas. The Twinge laughed in her face and said "You are supporting him because you love

him and want to be near him and not because you want to give him a chance. A chance is just what you are *not* giving him!"

It was then that she challenged the Twinge to open combat and lost.

Perhaps even then she might have proven to the Twinge that its idea was wrong, had it not been for a subtle change that was taking place in Stanley's small amount of sleepy vitality that was the mooted question.

It was beginning to awaken, but on the wrong side of the bed. The sweetness of the drowsy winter wore into an endless series of taunts before the spring arrived.

He was never so alive as when he was criticising her. He would go on for countless hours haranguing, until Eve, conquered at last, would burst into tears and sob out her anxiety in his arms.

The very moment she showed signs of weakness, he rose to the height of a god. He shouldered her sorrow. He bore her pain. Nightly the process went on: the torture, the tears and his power to soothe them away.

It was this very fact that gave the Twinge such an advantage. Stanley was powerful. He was a genius. He was a man, but as long as she took care of him, he'd never find himself. If she insisted on staying with him and not taking the man's place, they'd both starve. There was just one thing to do. She had known it for months, but it was just one of those things that folks refuse to see.

March came with hideous winds and cold. The sort of cold that sinks into the marrow and leaves it rock.

Eve came home with a good supper and a large amount of determination.

"The Nest" was sweet and comforting. With a treach-

erous tightening in her throat she looked about at all the little things they had collected together—precious, valueless little things that the outside world would never understand.

She went over to the shelf and picked up one thing after another; an ancient Hebrew prayer book that had interested Stanley; an Indian water jar, busted on the side, but with a certain majesty in its proportions; an old jewel case with processions of horses and chariots all around its bulging sides.

Eve shut her eyes and hurried into the bedroom. That was no way to begin the evening. She had set herself a job and mooning over a shelf of lover's junk was in no way included in the program.

She took off her street clothes and slipped into a blue gingham apron.

After supper when the things were cleared away and Stanley had spread the magazines out for the evening's reading, Eve said, "Let's not read this evening, Stan."

Stanley slammed his book down with a bang. Anger was his new method of not showing how cut up he was about things and Eve understood and he understood that she did.

"What's the grouch now?" he asked as though she had a new one every fifteen minutes.

"I've thought of a clever series of comics that you could do—I know it would be a go!"

He sneered at her, "Since when have you got an idea? You get the big-head quicker than any human being I ever met in my life."

It was queer, but she didn't even feel like crying. She just pretended not to notice what she didn't want to

notice and went on, "I thought dear, that while you were waiting for the big ideas to crystalize, you might do some practical little thing so the world wouldn't forget you."

"The world won't forget me!" he snapped, "I'll not prostitute my talent. It doesn't in the least matter if you type all day long—you can't do anything else. I did comics for four years and I'll be hanged if I'll ruin my reputation doing trash any more!" His eyes popped like fire-crackers.

"I don't think it would hurt your reputation at all. The practical things of life are the things to do first, then you can work your way to your dreams." Her tones were soft and quiet, but they didn't soothe Stanley.

"You can run your own game young lady, but you can't run mine!" He grabbed his hat and started toward the door. His hand was on the knob, then he turned and came back into the room.

"Eve, dear," he said, coming over to her and taking both her hands in his, "you've been a wonderful woman—I'm beaten and there's only one way out. Are you big enough?"

She looked at him with fear in her eyes. His face was set like a death-mask, but nowhere in all her soul could she find a single word with which to comfort him.

He pressed her hands till the bones creaked. "Are you big enough, Eve, to go with me anywhere I ask you to go?"

Eve could not part her frozen lips.

"Are you big enough to close all the windows and stuff all the cracks and turn on the gas." He jerked her up and crushed her painfully against him. "Karl Marx's two daughters did it when they found they were through living—are you big enough darling to go with me?"

His hands clutching her, trembled for an answer. She drew them down from her shoulders and kissed them both and said, "Go out under the stars, dearest, and think it all over—there must be some other way."

When the sound of his steps had melted into the silent coldness of the night, Eve went out under the stars, too—but in the opposite direction.

CHAPTER XX.

Sleet and rain hissed over the city. It was the early evening hour when men come to kiss their women. The hour when men come to tell their women that there will be no more kisses. The hour when women's hearts are lighted; the hour when women's hearts are broken.

Eve blew out the candle and crossed for the thousandth time to the window. She rubbed Spring's breath from the pane and looked out across Washington Square.

Will any of those men compiling the new dictionary be able to tell us what the word "lonely" means? "Sequestered from company or neighbors; solitary, retired; not frequented by human beings, etc?" No! that is not the meaning of lonely! The bitterest loneliness comes in the very broil of crowds! Loneliness has nothing to do with neighbors! Loneliness is not physical! Loneliness is a thing of the soul!

Eve was not looking at anything in the Square. She was trying to pierce beyond. Over the trees and over the bridges; through the walls of brick and stone; over the sky-scrappers; over the towers—to Fifty-seventh Street!

It was cold near the window. She shuddered and turned around expectant, as though she had heard someone coming up the stairs; as though she had heard someone calling her!

The red mouth of the Franklin stove grinned. Some coals slipped through the grate and rattled down to the tin pan. She looked fearfully about the huge attic room—

the splintered floor, the cob-webby rafters, the eager little stove so red and inadequate. The building was deathly still: On all the four floors below her were the sleeping sweatshops.

The Philosopher man was right. How she missed his quiet masterfulness. Where had he gone? Would he have told her that cold attic rooms and loneliness of the soul, came from being too sure about life? Would he have told her that fate was playing one of her practical jokes?

Work had been no escape. All day long in Miss Spitz's office, she banged viciously at the typewriter keys to drown the other banging in her brain. Each night she crawled to her garret-studio and sank down helplessly on the couch. If four short weeks had done this to her how could she hope to fight through the endless weeks and years to come?

She knew she couldn't fight! "So," said her bursting heart within her, "why try? You'll go back to him someday—why not now?"

"Stanley!" she sobbed and she felt him answer all across the city, "Eve!"

Out into the April night she fled, stumbling and slipping on the muddy pavements. She was white with desire. People in the street car stared at her. Matter-of-fact ones might think what they pleased, but romancers knew that she was white with the desire of love.

A million times back and forth raced her emotions while the street car crept along.

At last she found herself beneath his windows. Then she grew fearful. At the farthest point across the street she stood and looked up till the back of her neck froze and cracked with the strain.

Their treasured amber lamp wrapped the room in blessed

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It was cold near the window. She shuddered and turned around expectant, as though she had heard someone coming up the stairs; as though she had heard someone calling her!

The red mouth of the Franklin stove grinned. Some coals slipped through the grate and rattled down to the tin pan. She looked fearfully about the huge attic room—

Somewhere, even through an Italian winter window still unsealed, she heard a squeaky tenement phonograph grinding its hard rubber heart out in "Apple Blossom Time in Normandy!" She sang too. She was very joyous. "Only a little while to wait! How we will love each other for the sacrifice!"

She undressed and bathed herself in a little foot-tub before the fire, slipped a fresh soft gown over her shoulders and wound a woolly bath robe about her body.

Ten minutes later the windows were open and she was under the covers with a hot flat iron toasting her feet.

She smiled happily into her pillow. "Only a little while to wait! Stanley, darling, only a little while to wait!"

CHAPTER XXI

Cowdry lived on the rich side of Washington at number Three. Eve climbed the stairs to his with the fear of everything in her heart.

Her hot brain was scorching with all the changes that taken place in her life during the past two months—months that had stretched out in a tortuous length of curts and sobs and disillusionments.

Her legs dragged heavily to the top of the first flight. She was breathless and dusty like that hideous first week in the Y. W. C. A. on Fifteenth Street.

The top of the second flight was heavier and older and more stifling. She sat down on a hall bench and pressed her fingers into her eyes, "I must not cry any more—I am nearly blind! I *must* not cry any more!"

She rose and struggled up the third flight. Perhaps the rest wouldn't be so difficult. Perhaps her heart would finally get accustomed to the strain. Hearts could get accustomed to almost anything it seemed.

Roy Cowdry was one of those half-serious persons who clipped coupons for a living and wrote plays to while away the other twenty-three hours and fifty-nine minutes.

Before his open fire a little pie-crust table quivered with a load of hot tea and home-made cookies. The sight of so much hominess sent the truant blood from Eve's brain back into her heart.

"It's awfully decent of you to ask me up here, Mr. Cowdry, and I don't want you to give me your work unless you want to but I am going to ask you for a list of literary folks that I can canvass without using your

Cowdry laughed and showed an attractive mouthful of teeth. "Use my name!" he said, "You've got to use my name," and then he added in a whisper: "For life if you want to." They both laughed and Eve promised not to infringe and they drank four cups of tea apiece and then started out for a long walk.

"Aren't you the clever thing to start in business for yourself—I'll bet on you, Miss Kerwin!" said Cowdry, appropriating her arm.

"We won't be able to estimate HOW CLEVER until six months from now," said Eve. "You see I'm not entirely alone. Took the best typist Miss Spitz had—little Gumbiner girl—perfect shark for throwing light on what the author meant. We're partners."

"Well, you can have my work and I'll hammer you out a list—let's go over there for supper." He pointed across the Square to Fourth Street.

"Not now!" groaned Eve. "I'm all full of tea things. Couldn't promise even a salad capacity till eight o'clock!"

"Oh, it's open pretty nearly all night." They walked over and started up Fifth Avenue, black-windowed and deserted in the evening stillness.

Cowdry had the name for being very successful with women. They said it was the way he played the mandolin and whispered things to them, but Eve was less interested than if she had had a sack of potatoes dragging at her elbow.

Her thoughts were away out at Fifty-seventh Street. She was wondering what had happened. Pride would probably keep Stanley away until something big was accomplished, but he could have found her if he had wanted to.

She was thrilling over a re-marriage with him when

Cowdry burst into the sanctuary with "How's Marj—haven't seen her for a coon's age?"

"Didn't you know that Marj is very ill? She and her Shepherd are married and living in a shack in the Adirondacks."

"I certainly did not know it, but I've been in England lately so why should I. Let's send her some peanuts or crackerjack or something."

They went into a Page and Shaw place that was being closed for the night and parcel-posted a big box of foolishness to Marj.

"How's your tumpunks by this time, Miss Kerwin? You know tea just stimulates me for real food."

"I guess I'll be equal to something by the time we walk back."

Cowdry sat down on a water-plug and stamped his feet like a naughty boy and cried, "I won't walk back—I'm hungry! Mean, mean mama!"

She took his hand and coaxed him along. "It must walk back to Twenty-third and then if it wants to it can climb up on top of a bus and play it's a circus parade."

The apparently pacified child clung to her hand and together they jogged all the way back to the Square.

There was a slap of smoke and a thunder of music when the door of the restaurant opened. Dimly through the haze were a lot of people dancing up and down and bumping against each other in the crowded space of a small room.

The tables were jammed against the walls and drunken candles melted sideways in little green saucers on the window-sills.

With it all came the sense of someone beating carpets in the neighborhood. The dust bit scorchingly into Eve's

nostrils. Windows and curtains were down tight to hide the music and the smoke and the clinking of glasses away from the outside world, because the outside world has a horrid way of extracting licenses. There was a weary joy about these people—an ungracious hurry to clutch sensations before they slipped away forever.

The rhythm got into Eve's brain and made her dizzy. She wasn't sure whether she wanted to cry or laugh as Cowdry took her hand and led her up the steep narrow stairway to the dining-room.

It was an old-fashioned barn of a place with long tables and benches strung in endless succession around against the walls. Everywhere a tipsy array of cream-pitchers, mustard jars, unwashed glasses, cheap silver, sugar bowls and salt cellars jiggled each other on the unclothed boards.

It was packed with people: people limp and people stiff, painted people, pale people, drunken people, sober people—bleary, bleary people!

Everybody knew everybody else. Cowdry visited each table, introducing Eve en route. In the end he chose a place in the far corner of the room and motioned her to sit beside him.

"Want you to myself now—mix up with them later on." He whispered something about cocktails to greasy Fritz and greasy Fritz hurried off to the back of the restaurant and mumbled something unintelligible down the dumb-waiter shaft.

Cowdry made a broom out of a paper napkin and swept away enough crumbs and potato chips for Eve to rest her elbows. Together they bent their heads over the inky, blurred menu.

"Chicken?" asked Eve, "Is that good?"

"Fine, and I'll make you a wunderbahr dressing for your

salad and their cakes are gorgeneriferous and so is their macaroni," and then without stopping for breath he blurted out "Why in hell do you wear middy blouses?"

Eve could have knifed him for the question. It was the same as though he had said: "Why in hell do you love Stanley?"

Her throat trembled and her words came heavily, "Middy blouses—why—don't you like them—they're a great comfort—they—they're the only thing on earth that costs a dollar and lasts a life time."

"Oh, they're all right in the right place, but a woman as good looking as you ought to wear silks and satins."

Then her championship of Stanley's ideals rose to its fullest fury.

"Silks and satins!" she said indignantly, "I haven't had a thread of silk on my back since I learned about the Paterson Strike!"

"Well, I'll be damned if I wouldn't rather wear silk that grown-up people made than cotton picked by babies."

"Babies?" asked Eve, "babies—what do you mean—babies?" Something in her brain seemed to shrivel.

"Why, Miss Kerwin, don't you read the papers?"

"No, I hate papers!" she laughed a funny quivery little laugh of impatience.

"Well, I'd suggest that you learn to like them. Nothing low-brow about papers. I buy ten or twelve a day—get 'em still warm from the press. Lots going on in this world of ours especially in the cotton trade."

He banged his fists down on the table till the dishes jiggled, "My God! There's nothing rottener than cotton. Compared with it, silk is a regular little golden street of paradise. They take creeping babies and make 'em pick the stuff. Big sacks tied around their necks. Make 'em

drag 'em along and fill 'em eight hours a day. The kids that survive naturally never grow to human size, but thank God, most of 'em die!"

Eve's face was as white as her middy collar. Cowdry waxed elaborate, seeing the success of his story-telling, but Eve was white for quite another reason.

Why hadn't Stanley told her about this? It wasn't possible he didn't know. If he had humbled her for wearing silks and satins, he should have murdered her for wearing cotton. Something was wrong somewhere—Stanley's judgement! Was it that? Pillars of confidence upon which her very soul rested began to crumble.

"That's not all!" broke in Cowdry. "Those that survive go to work in the mills!" Then he laughed and patted her arm. "Don't take it so seriously, Miss Kerwin, everything's like that all over the world, only cotton's a little rottener than the rest because the South's so damned lazy. Here! Let's can this obituary service—ice cream or home-made pie?"

"No dessert, please. I couldn't eat a bite to save your precious life!"

"Why all this grief? It doesn't last long for those kids?"

Eve looked up hopefully.

"No," drawled Cowdry, "they got threads in their lungs and die of TB before they're any age at all—then their mamas and papas have another batch."

"Oh, let's get some fresh air!" said Eve, standing up suddenly.

Cowdry caught her by the arm. "Wait a minute, dear lady, even if you don't eat the grub, you have to pay."

A gentleman with pink beads around his neck strolled over and asked: "What's the tiff?"

"Oh, nothing personal I assure you. Just telling her about child labor in the South and it got her goat."

"Well, why don't you tell her something sweet now, for instance about the woolen mills in New England."

"You tell her, Don Juan," said Cowdry, handing Fritz a five dollar bill.

Don Juan cleared his throat and began: "Well, once I had a hunting lodge in Massachusetts. In the morning when I got up at four and waded through the snow and ice to see if my traps had mangled anything in the night, little lights came swinging down the hills; and the lights hung very low to the ground and there were hundreds of them like a will-o-the wisp carnival. Only it wasn't a carnival at all. It was the children, very little ones going to work in the mills. At night, way after dark came down, the carnival started again and the little lights swung low—this time up and up and up the hills and that meant that the mills were closed and the babies were going home to their cradles."

Hot needle points pricked Eve's brain and instinctively her hands shot away from the woolly feel of her skirt.

"Why doesn't somebody do something about it?" she asked, so naively, that the man with the pink beads went into spasms of laughter.

The horrors that Eve had just heard about were pounding in her brain but they were as light as a kitten's tread compared with the other things that smote her. Stanley—his one-sidedness; his emotional and illogical conclusions—what had caused them? Her silk dresses; she didn't want them back—but—were these people telling her untruths? If they were not, then Stanley? Perhaps he didn't know about these things. He was too clever not to know. Why then did he urge her to wear middies? Was it because he

wanted to wear flannel shirts? Was it because he was too lazy to dress himself that he commanded her to walk about the earth unattractive and plain? No! That was not it! Then what was it? What was crumbling? Why did the whole earth have a quick-sandy feel? Why was there no longer a place where she might stand and know herself safe? On the flaming red of her brain, these conflicts pounded like a blacksmith's hammer.

Her tottering world; these tawdry people about her—cigarette smoking women and soft-collared men—she shivered with disgust. The people at the table next were visioning her through narrowed eye-lids as though she were some new million-legged bug with nothing especially to offer them but the joy of pulling her to pieces.

It was very little better afterwards at the high-up studio where Cowdry took her. At least there were huge squashy cushions where Eve hid and relaxed. It was a large party and for a while she was left quite alone with the drama of her own terrifying emotions.

"You're no good as a tragedy queen, Miss Kerwin," said Cowdry, mixing a high-ball and handing it to her. "Sip this and you'll be much more attractive. Open your moufie and drink then your troubles 'll trot off to the back of your brain where they belong."

But she didn't want to drink. She wanted to be clear-headed and sharp. She wanted to study this room full of couples in intimate poses and search out their careless philosophy. Maybe she was all wrong in her sublime seriousness about life. Maybe they were right to take it as a happy joke. Was life to them as altogether sweet and worth while as it looked or was their vision blurred? Was life to her as altogether woeful and tragic as it looked or was her vision blurred?

CHAPTER XXII.

It was midnight and summer. Eve had just cold-creamed her face and settled down with a cup of tea before the window when there came three quick pulls at the door bell.

She decided at once not to answer it. It rang again and again and again and with a sudden panicky fear that it might be some urgent message from Stanley—even Stanley himself, she stepped out on the fire-escape and called down, "Who's ringing?"

An entirely unfamiliar voice called back, "Is Miss Kerwin in? Frightful hurry about getting some typing done—I saw a light, that's why I rang.

"Yes, she's in. All in!" said Eve. "But you can wait a minute till she gets some human clothes on!" Back in the studio she pinned her hair up, slipped into a blouse and skirt, added a bit of rouge and powder and flew down the creaky stairs to open the front door.

"Don't stumble here at this turning—be careful—no, please you go first so I won't make a shadow. I know the way!"

He was a small man with pinched Jewish nose and whimsical Irish eyes.

Up in the studio he began to explain. "You see Mr. Callahan's taken this play of mine but he's nervous and exacting and I've had to do a lot of changing—put in bedsteads and kimonos and things so's the public'll like it."

He looked at her questioningly and she answered: "I see, I see."

"Well, now—now he's nervous and exacting as I said before and I've got to have all these changes in by tomorrow morning—eight o'clock sharp, he said, but he meant ten, because he never gets up till eleven."

Eve liked the little man. Nothing but his eyes were gay but they were on the verge of laughter all the time.

She smiled back at him. "So, Sir, you want me to sit up all night and type while you go home and sleep!"

"Nothing so tragic!" he declared. "I'll sit right here and fan you or give you aromatic spirits of ammonia or cocktails till it's all done and then I'll—I'll take you out and feed you!"

"It's a go!" she said, pulling her table about till the drop-light was directly over her head.

Away she rattled like a machine gun while the little man sat quietly on the floor in front of the window, smiling at the world outside. Occasionally she glanced at him. He was a dreamer, too. Perhaps all great men had to be dreamers.

No doubt the huge window frame was his precenium arch and just beyond the sill tripped the actors and actresses. Perhaps as her fingers flew, his words were coming into life before his eyes. He leaned over on his elbow and rested his ear in the palm of his hand. His hand gave way slowly and his head drooped to the rug; the fringed curtains came down over his laughing eyes and he slept huddled like a weary child.

Eve slowed down gradually so that her silence wouldn't awaken him and creeping across the room spread a huge woolly shawl over his slender body.

She stood there for a moment looking down at him. He was the Stanley type—sweet, sweet droopy children, both of them. For contrast she looked up at Schulenberg's

"Incense Burner" that stood on the beam above the drop-light. Big-muscled man; father of nations; sublime male!

She glanced around her studio. How beautiful it was in black and white and splashes of turquoise blue. Things had swerved mightily since her arrival there a few months before. There was no longer the weak little cardboard sign on the door down stairs but a durable brass affair that told the story of Kerwin and Company, Expert Typists.

All day long from the room behind her studio came the music of four galloping machines. All day long, up-town and down, in subways and buses and elevateds, Eve canvassed from office to studio, from studio to Harlem flat, from Harlem flat to East River tenement—wherever there was the possibility of a manuscript.

That one evening spent with Cowdry had made great changes in her being. She decided that Stanley was illogical but she loved him anyway. She wanted him every moment of her life and she was going to have him. He had struggled pathetically against conditions and it was of no use. Socialism and Anarchism and all the other isms were not methods by which to make one's living. They were lovely Spring dreams that would eventually come to pass but not through his efforts, or anybody's effort, but just through the slow and natural evolution of things. *Maybe! But a little push is not hurt*

She looked down at the filmy blouse she was wearing. Some poor devil had probably put her eyes out embroidering it. Well, that was horrible, of course, but the blouse was very beautiful and if Eve had refused to wear it, that wouldn't have healed conditions in Bulgaria or Roumania or Mesopotamia or wherever agile fingers created such things.

And judging by the eager work that Stanley was putting across in the newspaper world, great changes were also taking place out at Fifty-seventh Street. Evidently Stanley had about arrived at her conclusions. She pulled down the scrap book where all his precious cartoons were pasted. *The New York American* was running a daily strip: "Modern Hans Anderson" and the little sparrow in the right-hand lower corner of the last picture was Stanley's signature. His work was beautiful. The treatment almost too high-brow to last. Stanley was dramatizing with the pencil. Eve ran her finger along the lovely lines, studying every inch. That beautiful imagination that had been blocked so long was flowing again.

And the strip was really very funny, too. Always a business bore with unalterable schemes laid. Schemes that could not fail. Million dollar Charlie Chaplin salaries, then poof! The pie-faced boob always walked away with the spoils. It wasn't the humor that riveted Eve to the page but the drawing. There it was, a supposedly silly little strip—terrific, mysterious, searching. Something that cut through all the outer reserves and attacked the vital energies of life. It was the same old philosophy that life cannot be planned, that made the thing so poignant. Of course, consciously this would escape the low-brow, but, unconsciously, it must have been the very thing that had attracted the editor.

She sat down at her typewriter again and gave herself over to a sort of future-fancying.

Since that stormy night when she stood below his windows, she had not seen him. Her life had been full to bursting with work, but always at the back of her brain burned the big desire for him. Always in her heart ached

the loneliness that could only be satisfied by his arms about her body and his lips pressed close to her lips.

Those daily cartoons were her precious reward for giving him the chance to fight out his salvation alone.

She leaned over and pressed her forehead against the cold iron of the typewriter. Just at this lonely hour she wanted him so keenly. She wanted his kisses. She wanted more and more of the *little language* in her ear. She wanted their play times and their long walks through the crowded East districts. She wanted him big and glorified like she had planned him.

Why had she failed? Why couldn't two human beings who adored each other as they did, work out their loving salvation together instead of apart? What was it about dogged human nature that was always delighting in unnecessary tragedies?

She sat up suddenly and began to work again. If youth didn't always believe so in itself, it never would be able to go on.

She pounded away as though she were determined to beat something into life. Her shoulders were hunched over and her eyes were glued to the key-board. Somehow she feared to look up—something might dazzle her being?

But it mattered not where she looked, the dazzlement was the same. She would go back to Stanley tomorrow! When the sun was up! When the air was heavy with loving and mating! When Summer was running along all the highways of the world producing leaves and buds out of his magicians cap! Tomorrow! It was already tomorrow!

Closer she leaned, to pound out the last page of the stranger's play, then she stood up and stretching her

arms high above her head, murmured: "What a back-ache—what yawns."

Tip-toing over to the window she knelt down with her arms resting on the sill. It was what some great man had called "the grey chiffon hour,, when the pale moon bows low in maidenly fashion and the sun, leonine and fierce strides across the earth melting the mysteries with his yellow breath."

The yellow breath melted the mysteries for Eve. She sighed wearily and smiled. Well, the future-fancying had been worth while. She might not have been able to last through the night had it not been for the glory of the morrow.

Now it was all over. Tomorrow was here. Summer was here. Birds were chittering in the Square and the daylight asked: "Go back to Stanley?" and she answered: "Of course I shall do nothing of the sort!"

The man on the rug sat up suddenly rubbing his eyes like the little child that all his kind actually are.

"Oh, dear me, I must have dozed! How can you ever forgive me—I—"

Eve stopped him with a big, healthy laugh. "Yes, I'm very much afraid that you dozed—silly man, why should both of us have stayed awake because I had to work?"

He looked bewildered at the woolly shawl. "And you covered me up, too—you're the mother kind all right. You'd better be careful because that sort never marries satisfactorily."

"I'm not the mother-kind at all!" said Eve. "I'm just a hard-headed business woman and you'll think so, too, when you get my bill for keeping me up all night!"

How stridently we all march through the world awakening people's twinges. Eve's ached acutely again.

Like a child anticipating a holiday he suggested to Eve: "Let me go out and buy some nice things and we'll cook breakfast here."

"No, thanks!" said Eve, laughing bitterly. "I've passed the stage of wanting to feed men that I like. I want them to feed me! So you see I'm *not* a mother-woman after all!"

"I don't blame you, Miss Kerwin. Blank foolishness to do that kind of work when you don't have to."

"It isn't that, Mr. What's-your-name, but feeding a man reminds me of something I'd rather forget."

For a moment his Irish eyes untwinkled as though there were memories behind them, too, then he reached for the manuscript that she was holding in her hands.

"No! No" she said, holding tight to the typewritten sheets, "I've got to correct these. That's the way I've made my hit. Nothing but perfect copy goes out of this place. Oh, say, can't you waste an hour somewhere while I skim through this and make myself morningified/ Then we'll go way up to the Waldorf and have a "Regular Breakfast" for fifty cents if you're poor, and an irregular one if you're rich—and by the way, before you go, would you mind telling me what your name is? Just a little formality."

"Margate!" he laughed and trotted off down the steps and out into the awakened Square.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"She thought you were a G— d— boob!"

Stanley was shaving before the bath-room mirror and talking out loud as he always did when he wanted to impress himself.

"Well, she knows now if she's learned how to read the newspapers that you're not a G— d— boob!"

He blustered and blew masculinely into the water as he rinsed the soap-suds from his face. He couldn't find his comb so he parted his hair with his hands and brushed furiously above his left ear in an effort to master a cowlick. It simply couldn't be done. For one moment it would lie flat then rising slowly it would whirligig around in its old mood of defiance.

"Oh, hell!" The brush pounded on the floor.

He sidled out of the bath-room and plowed his way over almost unconquerable masses of debris, to his work table.

The place had not been cleaned since Eve left. The beds had not been made since Eve left. Sometimes he slept in one; sometimes in the other—whichever looked the warmest.

Every dish in the flat was caked with food and stuck down in the wash-tub.

Somewhere once Stanley had seen the picture of a great money king at his work. Under the picture it said "Desk cleared for action!" There was not a thing on the smooth mahogany surface but the sheet of paper upon which the magnate was at that moment working.

Stanley stood at his table and said: "Desk cleared for

action!" With one mighty swoop of his arm, everything went flying to the floor. He then proceeded to take out a fresh sheet and pin it to the board. Uncorking a little army of India inks, he went to work.

Over the white surface fled his pencil, trailing exquisite lines. There was a grave defiance in his straight posture; in the throw-back of his beautiful blonde head.

For two hours he worked without change of position, then he leaned back exhaustedly and closed his eyes.

"Hell! She couldn't stick! She's a peach! That's what she calls love! Deserted me just when I needed her most!"

He got up and made himself a cup of chocolate. It was full of lumps and watery. He looked at it bewildered. How was it Eve always got it so thick and smooth?

With eyes shut, as though not seeing it might somehow sweeten the taste, he swallowed it as one takes a dose of medicine.

Then came a gentle softening of his feelings. "Poor old Eve, I made her beastly unhappy. Course she loves me. She's quit so I'd get to work—God, she's practical! She ought to be married to a street car conductor!"

He sat down and looked quietly about the mussy room. "Gee, it's peaceful here even if it is lonely. She's a regular whirlwind—uh! Her quickness used to make my nerves ache—bless her heart, she's all right and I'm all wrong. I've got to speed up and boss her all over the place—that's what her kind of female wants."

Again the lines began to grow across the smooth paper and in two more hours the strip was finished and signed in the corner with the little sparrow.

He stood up and stretched his handsome body. "T. G. that's done!"

In the closet under his coat was a middy that Eve had left behind. He ran his hand lovingly over the sleeve that was still creased with the lines of her elbow.

On the bed-post hung the little red pocket-book. He opened it and counted the money for the thousandth time. Thirteen dollars. The same thirteen that she had left for him. He had never touched it; he never would touch it. He would take it back to her along with himself when his account registered one thousand dollars.

He dug into his pockets, pulled out his bank book and smiled. It was growing every week at the rate of thirty dollars. Ten he kept out for his weekly expenses.

"Six hundred to the good already—three more months will make it a thousand and then Eve—darling!"

He looked about the place to see if anybody was watching, then shyly lifted the little red pocket-book and kissed it.

"Oh, what the hell does any man care about success—damned rot the whole works! What a man wants is a woman—a woman that'll look up to him!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

Twenty years from now psychologists will be at great pains to explain that thought transference really exists. The next step will be to evolve a plan by which the mind can be *blanked*, in case for instance, one is a literary person and an idea pirate looms up on the horizon.

Of course this business of blanking the mind won't be of the slightest difficulty to most people. But for those who have more on their brains than their hair—think of the law suits. How is one ever to know if an idea is one's own or if one has just lifted it from a visitor?

All this being merely offered as a curve by which we turn again to the story. On the day after Margate got his manuscript back from Eve, the Fate Sisters were putting in an eight-hour day at carding and weaving and spinning when they struck a knot in the shape of a very oily person who climbed the stairs to the offices of Kerwin and Company, presenting a play to be copied.

The completed job was promised within the week. Now whether the man looked mysterious or whether one of the Misses Fate nudged Eve in the rib is difficult to say, but just as though she had been told to safeguard something or somebody, she did what she had never done before in her stenographic life; she made out a little slip of paper with the following lines on it and asked his oily highness to sign it.

Have you had this copied before?

Have you collaborated with anyone?

Have you discussed your plot with anyone?

To all of which he said "No," and signed the paper to that effect.

After Eve read the play, she felt positively clairvoyant and had it not been for the fact that she had broken company with Miss Busybody and all Miss Busybody's poor relations on the day she opened her own shop, she would have gone directly to Margate and told him something which she didn't go to him and tell him at all.

Their breakfast at the Waldorf developed into a tea at the Ritz and the tea grew into several dinners and then he dared her to go on as the maid in the first and last acts and as one of the mob in all the acts between, and she took up the dare.

And this leads through the sweltering summer to the Indian red of October and the dress rehearsal of the play. Three hundred principals and supers shivered in the wings while Callahan the great producer stormed and raged about the place like a caged hyena.

The eight weeks of rehearsal had disillusioned Eve concerning the stage. She had expected the people to be fascinating and they weren't even interesting. Press agent stories announced that many fine ladies from the vicinity of Fifth Avenue had joined the company for stage experience. As a matter of truth, they were mostly bedraggled wretches from Double Fifth, which in plain language is Tenth Avenue. Females that existed year in and year out on the eight dollars a week that a super is paid—professional "Extra Ladies" dressed in the cast-off clothes and shoes six or seven years removed from Callahan's stars.

A seasoned theatregoer might even have said: "Oh see that orchid dress on the right? Well, Etheline Silverthread wore that in Conquering Caroline!" or "See that

cardinal robe: Didn't Rosalie Heatherbloom wear that in Beautiful Bachelor Buttons at The Empire the year I came out?"

And poor "Extra Ladies"—so many of them had babies. Sickly little shrimps that slept through the performances in suit cases under the dressing tables.

It was marvelous that so much frazzled humanity could mass up rose-colored from the other side of the footlights.

"It's limberger!" shouted Callahan striding up and down the middle aisle of the great theatre, gulping high-balls from a water pitcher.

"It's limberger! To the garbage can—to the garbage can I tell you!" and draining the last drop of alcoholic consolation he smashed the pitcher on the floor and sank into the nearest red velvet seat, covering his face with his two hands.

Callahan had his own way of producing a play. He hired the strongest truck horse he knew to drag the circus into shape, then he appeared at the first dress rehearsal and ground it to sausage meat.

But he simply couldn't do it without weeping. He was weeping now. Fat tears dripped through the eight cracks between his ten fingers.

Margate, the author, who should by all precedent, have been seated in the dampest dimness of the back row, buzzed about like a debutante at her coming-out party. He couldn't help it. It was his first play. He whispered and explained and exhorted and shook the script in people's faces till Callahan shouted for him to dry up.

He dried up like a wet towel over a hot radiator, but like the wet towel, he dried stiff. He stalked over the little run-way that sprouted from the middle aisle up over the footlights to the stage, and sat himself down like a

wooden Indian in a seat conspicuous but far removed from Callahan.

Callahan rose to his feet. Tears were streaming down his face, I'm ruined! That's what I am—I'm ruined! The play's a damned failure. Every cent I've got on earth is tied up in it—I'm ruined. I tell you I'm ruined!" He staggered into a box and stepped over the brass railing onto the side of the stage, and Margate, entirely forgetful of his injured dignity, trotted two steps behind.

"That's how Drury Lane puts it all over us," wailed Callahan, pointing to the boat-house with vivid green vines painted on its wall. "Wouldn't have a lousey painted vine crawlin' over a canvas dock, they'd have the real shrubbery cottoning to wood! Savey! I ain't mad at you! You done swell, but why didn't you pad it out? Don't save me money—I'll buy you a lumber yard! Ain't I just had the "Mermaidens" fail on me and ain't I got three hundred dollars' worth of sea-weed and honey-suckle souring in the warehouse? Use 'em! Use 'em! Smear 'em all over the place. Don't let Drury Lane knock the stuffin's out of you—work like hell and don't look lousey!" Then he pulled out a stogie and lit it and those who were acquainted with the great producer knew that he didn't consider himself ruined at all, but had just progressed to the point where he was preparing to roll up his sleeves and get to work.

"The Other Side" was the biggest melodrama that he had ever attempted. In fact it was about the biggest thing anybody had ever put on outside a circus tent. There were three hundred people in it and twenty-five horses, besides tallyhoes, automobiles and aeroplanes.

Callahan chewed and puffed at his stogie as though it were the only tangible thing on earth.

"Strike!" he yelled, "and travel right through again so I can rip the guts out of it on the way!" Fifty-five stage hands whisked the adventurers' den off and slid the country side into place.

The trumpeter blew his horn and the tallyho, drawn by six excited horses, pounded down the middle of the stage dragging with it the huge tree that decorated the middle of the lawn. The ingenue fainted, everybody screamed, the horses reared up on their hind legs ready to dash across the footlights.

Fifty-five stage hands swarmed around the coach like ants around a cracker crumb. The horses were unhitched and led off disgraced. The ingenue was stretched out on the stage and given a dose of aromatic spirits of ammonia.

Callahan was blazing. "Gee! that's a swell entrance! Do that the opening night and I'll shoot your damned skull off!" He spat his words at the driver. The driver crawled down off the box and walked to the stage entrance then whisking about on his heel, called back: "Get somebody else to do your dirty work, I'm through!"

"Proceed with the drowning!" shouted Callahan. The hero appeared, carrying in his arms the super, who was to get a nightly wetting in place of the heroine.

Callahan threw his hat and coat on the stage and roared with laughter, only it wasn't the kind of laughter that improves one's digestion.

"Do you call that wet? My God, look at her hair—dry as the Sahara! Wet 'er! I say wet 'er!"

The super jumped out of the brave hero's arms and faced Callahan. "If I ain't wet enough, then you get somebody else that'll get wetter! I ain't pleadin' for pneumonia at eight dollars a week!"

"Out you go!" bawled Callahan. He turned toward

the empty theatre and called: "Miss Trixy—here's your chance!"

A small blonde girl hurried up out of the dark and scrambled on the stage.

Callahan looked her in the eye. "Drown yourself! W-E-T" he spelled out, "No sprinkling—drown yourself! Buy a rubber union suit and charge it to me but drown W-E-T! Are you willing?"

"Yes, sir," she answered, white and scared as Callahan pushed her into the hero's arms.

In the scene before the saloon where the villianess stabs the tramp who knows her secret, Callahan went mad. "My God what is this? A suffrage parade? What are all these females for? They don't advance the plot! Can em! I say, can 'em! Can that beggar at the corner! Can the whole damn scene and jump to the murder!"

When the fort was bombarded, Callahan pulled out the three remaining hairs on top of his head. "Noise! Nothing but noise! The whole damned scene is on the fritz! Cut it!"

The truck-horse stage director rushed over and whispered: "Mr. Callahan, that scenery cost five thousand dollars!"

"What to hell do I care if it cost five hundred thousand dollars! To the ash heap!"

Then Callahan laughed again. Not a healthy laugh, but a menacing blue-beardy cackle.

"Who the hell planned that scene?" he asked. "Let a boy die for forty-five minutes singing 'My Bonnie lies over the ocean!' Ha! Ha! Ha! Save the agony and choke him now! Bring on the Café stuff!"

Stone walls and vine-clad trellises were rushed on and in three minutes there were ladies and gentlemen chatting

and smoking at all the tables excepting one. That was reserved for the entrance of the villainess.

And the villainess! How Callahan barked at her! "God, you don't know how to look ruined! Here!" He pushed her out of the way and acted her part. His voice, his head, the droop of his shoulders were things that a Bernhardt might have envied. When at last he wept unreservedly on the villain's shoulder, up from the wings came bravos and thundering applause dictated by three hundred spinal columns thrilled right up to their cerebellums.

It was midnight when Callahan finally sank down on the boathouse steps and muttered: "Now it's a play—by God, now it's a play!"

Hot coffee was passed around to resuscitate the exhausted actors and Callahan drank his out of the bucket. With great effort he rose stiffly and walked to the middle of the stage. "You've been fine! Every damned one of you!" He waved his hand in a semi-circle to include every actor and actress, every stage hand, every "extra person" in the cast. "I don't know how I'll ever thank you enough. If the play's a success we'll all be rich; if it's a failure, no person here shall ever come to want as long as I can beg, borrow, or steal the money to help him out! Now we're going through again straight to the end!"

Eve was so frightened when she came on as the maid that Callahan barked at her like a dog. "You! Have you got anything to say? Tell it to the audience, don't murmur into the theatrical scrim!"

Callahan didn't understand her fear. Eve wasn't afraid of him, but of a certain oily face that she had seen creeping about in the back of the theatre for the past three hours.

Nobody seemed to notice it until it walked down the

middle aisle and up the runway over the orchestra to the center of the stage. Of course the face had a body hitched to it, but the body didn't count at all. It was the face that was startling. The face white with fury.

Callahan was as superstitious as the devil himself and those who happened to be facing him at the time said afterwards that he looked like a corpse standing up.

"This play's not going on!" announced the oily face.

Callahan strode up and poked his square chin almost into the intruder's jaw. "The hell it isn't!" he muttered, clenching and unclenching his right fist.

"Well, if I say it's not, then it's not!" Oily Face's lips hung so loose that he was positively hideous.

Callahan grinned. "That's great melodrama but bad real life. What's the grouch?"

"Margate stole my play!"

"Stale stuff," said Callahan. "What's the O. Henry twist?"

"I'll give the O. Henry twist, all right," snarled Oily Face, diving down into his pocket and fishing out a stiff folded paper. "Here's an injunction—eat it and I hope you'll get indigestion—your play's not going on!" He fairly threw the paper at Callahan and started toward the back of the stage.

Eve's knees knocked so loud that she heard them. At last she was a real heroine. She would save the play and Callahan would give her a real part out of gratitude. She saw her name in electric lights on Broadway, blinding the eyes of all passers by—particularly the home town folks who said she'd never do anything.

Meanwhile she couldn't find her vocal chords nor her breath and there was a scuffle in the middle of the stage

where Callahan was just about squeezing the daylights out of Oily Face.

And then just like a real heroine she arose from her stupor and commanded: "Stop!" If she had died that moment her glorious ghost might look back and say that life had been worth while.

Callahan let go and Oily Face yelled: "She's the thief! Now I understand! She's the thief!" He gasped for breath, "She's in the business to steal—thief! Thief!"

It was all so marvelous, getting a big scene like this. Eve longed to hold on to it forever, but Callahan snapped her ecstasy in the middle by demanding: "Who are you?"

"I—I—" Eve couldn't get any farther.

"Well spit it out!" yelled the great producer. "We are not here for our health!"

"I'm a copyist—I copied both plays and while they are similar they're different."

Callahan clutched his head: "My God, I thought you knew something that would help!"

"I do, Mr. Callahan, I do!"

"Well spill! For God's sake, spill!"

"I don't know why I did it, but I just suspected trouble and I—I made him sign a paper—that nobody'd seen his play and nobody'd collaborated—and—and nobody'd heard him talk about it and I've got that paper here." She reached into her bodice and brought out the scrap that she had worn ever since she made him sign it.

Oily Face grabbed, but Margate standing behind Eve, was too swift for him.

Oily Face nearly burst a blood vessel. "Of course, I signed that paper, but what's that? When she's got both plays in her mits, what's to prevent her from passing the bonbons?"

"But I—" Eve was ill with nerves. "I copied Mr. Margate's the day before I saw his play."

"Joke!" snapped Oily Face. "What's to prevent your copying Margate's again?"

"I—" started Eve again, but Callahan interrupted her not with a big part in the play but with a command to get back in the wings where she belonged. Then he turned to Oily Face. "Now look here young man, I've got people to prove that I've had Margate's play for three months. There may be some similarity, but that's not our fault." He bowed low before his victim. "Great minds often run in the same channel—isn't that the old witticism? Now you'd better go and whisper something to the judge about this injunction—and by the way when you have another play finished, drop around and give me first chance to read it!"

As Oily Face disappeared through the stage entrance, Callahan turned to Margate and asked: "Who in the devil is that mad man?"

"Oh," answered Margate, "just another little squirrel's breakfast."

CHAPTER XXV.

Old lady Rosenheim, with her breath coming in jerks, climbed to the top floor of her house at One Hundred and Twenty-ninth Street.

In that brown-stone-front was honeycombed the entire clan of Rosenheim. Eighteen of them—cousins, uncles, aunts, sisters and brothers, all equally under the sway of grandma. Like the Jewesses of old, she ran her domain vigilantly.

No eighteen Gentiles could live together in harmony for the sake of economy—nor could eighteen Jews live in harmony, but ah! what a soporific is economy!

Jake Rosenheim was the youngest member of the household and a *schlemiel*. He had never made a cent in his life. He was a dreamer—a scribbler. When the other members of the clan taunted him about his genius and asked sarcastically concerning the great publishers who had besieged his garret that day, he would answer sweetly, "I am so young; there's so much time—it must be a great book."

In the heart of every Jewish mother hides the hope that she is destined to bring forth the Messiah. It is the greatest of romances. In the eyes of old lady Rosenheim, Jake was the Messiah! Jake, her youngest grandchild. Jake, the romance of her lonely years.

The worn leather pocket-book in the top drawer of Grandma's dresser was their common property. Everything that Jake and grandma possessed was common property. It was the very greatest of romances!

In this world of unkindliness we all choose our corners. Unlike the family cat, Jake chose his corner for aloneness and not for warmth. It was at the top of the house and very cold in winter. He always carried up a copper warming pan for his feet and wrapped his body about with a great gray blanket.

The windows of his perch were very small and although his sensitive soul could feel the parks and rivers and bays of Manhattan, the view afforded his eyes was an endless row of brown-stone-fronts of the identical pattern as the one in which he lived.

Once we choose our corner, it becomes consecrated ground. To our trained vision, it is always in perfect order though to the unsympathetic eye it is always in a perfect mess. And we dare anybody to put it to rights. We dare anybody to so much as dust the surface of our cluttered golden oak table. We, most of all things on earth, desire to come back to our corner and find it precisely as we left it.

This little roost with its lock and key was the only place where Jake was safe from the clan. He was safe from the love of grandma wherever he chose to be.

At the very moment that Jake added the last line to his beloved book, grandma opened the door. So breathlessly did she peep in that Jake never heard her. How she hoped that he would turn and say "Muttershen, dear," but his eyes were closed and his hands usually so tense were relaxed on the table. With a nod of her old head and a smile all of love, she closed the door as gently as she had opened it and descended to the kitchen.

All the way down in the Fifth Avenue bus, Jake gulped great breaths of cold afternoon air and thought of nothing. He was just the essence of blank happiness.

At the end of the line, he took out a little circular with Kerwin & Company on the cover and reassuring himself about the number, walked up the steps at Seventy-one and rang the bell.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Eve groped about in all the dark corners near the door where cards and letters might somehow hide themselves. Each evening, no matter how weary she was, she always groped about in this way as though she had lost something precious and was determined to find it.

All the afternoon as she canvassed from studio to studio for manuscripts, she had a hunch that something was going to happen. Something big. Something mighty. Something big and mighty could mean but one thing to her struggling emotions—Stanley! She told herself that he would never write to her, but that was only because in saying this she hoped to hoodwink the Fate sisters into fooling her.

Like a great many hunches, this one did not make good. She groped in all the dark corners but there was no message. She jerked her hat and coat off and throwing herself across the couch, wept dark shadows under her eyes.

The *New York American* had announced a new series by Stanley Bird. He had become an institution. Success no longer dodged about corners to elude him—and still he did not come to her. All the great love she had given him meant less than his bitterness toward her for leaving. That had been his spur!

In the evening gray of the studio she was still clutching at the glorious hope of love and children and home when the timid steps of Jake Rosenheim sounded on her stairway.

"I've written a book," said Jake, settling himself uneasily on the edge of the chair.

"And you want me to type it?" asked Eve, going about the studio and lighting all the candles.

"No, I want you to publish it!"

She turned and smiled at him. "But I'm not a publisher, my dear man, I'm a plain garden variety typist."

Eve took the sheets from his hands and sat down beside the green lamp to read.

She turned the pages quickly. She read in blocks. At midnight she was still sitting immovable in her chair, still turning the pages, still reading in blocks.

He sat watching her, his blue eyes sparkling; his body still expectant on the edge of his chair.

Finally Eve shuffled the sheets together and looked up at him. "You have written a great play," she said.

"It isn't a play, is it? I thought I had written a novel."

"It is the greatest play that I have ever read. Tragedy, poignant Jewish tragedy and different because you have wrecked the bravest Jewish ideals."

"Yes, well, why I did it was this: We Jews are just as weak as other people, only when Jews try to prove it, other folks won't listen, so I thought it would be a good idea if I had anything to say, to write it."

Eve smiled at his boyishness. "You've had something to say and you've written it all right. Now listen to me. I'm thrilled in every vertebrae over your book and I got enough out of my six week's experience in Margate's "The Other Side" to say that this is something new under the sun—we'll produce it."

"But, Miss Kerwin, do you know enough to produce a play?"

"No! But Belasco and I know people who *do* know enough and we're not afraid to employ them and take the glory for ourselves."

Eve reached for the phone and called Margate.

His blustering presence in the studio seemed to frighten Rosenheim, who crawled deeper and deeper into his shell and eventually disappeared down the stairs without either of them realizing that he was gone.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"But suppose we do make a great play out of it," said Margate nervously skimming page after page. "It's Spring and nobody'll put it on for you now."

"You stupid, I'll put it on myself! Oh I'm so thrilled! Don't you understand. This is the sort of thing that really makes people happy! Big business! The romance of big ideas! Oh, Mr. Margate, you must help me. This is my chance!"

She leaned forward and began to pound out her ideas on her knee. "I'll rent a theatre for one week—a theatre that is closed for the season. I can get it for five hundred dollars. I'll engage every Broadway star that is out of a job. They'll come for nothing and take a chance on making money if the thing goes. Mr. Margate, if I make good, I'll have you to thank for everything. It was Callahan's handling of your play that gave me the idea. Oh, I know now that nothing matters in this world but the bigness of one's job—that's romance enough! It's all I want!" She walked excitedly up and down the length of the room.

As she passed him, Margate caught her wrist. "This is not all you want, Evelyn." He drew her into his arms and kissed her.

It is so sweet to be loved. So sweet to be wanted by somebody—it doesn't always matter who the somebody is.

"Evelyn, dear, you want love and home and all that sort of thing—you know it. A mother-woman like you can't go on forever slaving as you slave. At least she can't without love—Evelyn, will you marry me?"

It was so comforting there in his arms that Eve wished with all her heart that Gabriel would blow his horn and end everything right then and there, sweetly and quietly.

Along with the peace of his arms came a burning resentment toward Stanley. How dare he treat her so indifferently? How dare he gulp his success alone when it was really her sacrifice that had made him reach out for life again?

Then rushed over her a flood of love for him. If he was waiting, it was only so that he might bring not petty success to lay at her feet but the whole world of art marching in adulation behind his chariot.

All the comfort went out of Margate's arms. She drew away from him. "I'm married, you know, Mr. Margate."

"Married?" His voice was full of reproach and anger.

"Yes. I really thought you knew. Stanley Bird."

"So you're the one? I've heard vague tales about Stanley's wife leaving him, but nobody ever sees Stanley and nobody knows facts. You knew I cared for you; why didn't you stop me before." Then he put his arms about her again. "We'll get a divorce—wish everything were as easy as that!"

"But I love him."

Margate glared. "Then why aren't you with him?"

Tears rushed to Eve's eyes. "Oh, Mr. Margate, I can't talk to you about it. Let's go back to our old friendship—the way it was before tonight. I need you so much. Please let's go back."

Margate gathered up the manuscript and went out hurriedly, banging the door behind him.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Stanley tripped across the rug at his front door and stumbled into "The Nest." It was a very mussy nest and the confusion was getting on his nerves. He decided to clean it up. He wanted to do something with his hands, which for some reason were growing more and more trembly.

Women have that advantage over men. They cook and darn and mend and wash and iron. "Makes 'em placid," he muttered, starting in with the pile of dishes in the sink.

The water was piping hot and he turned it on full force, splashing his coat and steaming his hands.

"Criminy!" he spat out. "Those goll dern fools never know how to run a furnace!"

He wiped his coat with a greasy dish-towel and then decided that it would probably be better if he worked in his shirt sleeves. But he forgot to roll them up so in a moment his soft cuffs sagged and dripped with water.

He might have had a cleaning woman for a dollar, but in the first place he loathed and abominated the whole tribe of cleaning women and in the second he couldn't bear to separate that dollar from its companions in the little Bank of Europe on First Avenue. His pile had grown to proportions. He was rich—as riches are counted on the East Side. He glanced into the other room where Eve's little red pocket-book hung on the bed-post. Snug in the middle of it were her thirteen dollars, still just as she had left it.

He knew exactly where she was—that had been the

easiest thing to discover. He had walked down to the Square one day and actually seen her come out of her house. The vision still made his blood boil. Slick tailored gown and high-heeled shoes, furs and silk embroidered bag. Beautiful! A perfect picture of fashion! That's all the good his teaching had done her. She had about as much social consciousness as a flea!

"Perhaps it's best—at least for her—to fit into society as it is." He looked down at his slovenly gray shirt. "Maybe I'm wrong after all. I guess folks *have* to care on which street they live and how they dress and with whom they associate. The world's standards may be wrong but they're damned hard to buck."

Suddenly he began to smile. He really looked pleased. His fresh laundry was on the bed. In two minutes he was in a clean shirt and in two more he was bounding down the stairs in the throes of a new idea.

The salesman at Wanamaker's walked from counter to counter with him in the very politest Wanamaker manner. Together they purchased with Stanley's whole week's salary, shirts, stiff collars, studs, neckties, cuff-links, shoes, silk socks, a soft brown beaver hat and a new suit of clothes.

"Looks very smart," asserted the salesman as he put the final touches to Stanley in the little fitting room.

"Very, very smart!" said Stanley and walked out of the store.

There was no doubt about the way he looked. He was the dudiest dude that he had been since he left college.

He crossed over to Fifth Avenue and took an uptown bus. At Twenty-eighth he descended and mixed with the Spring procession on the sidewalk. He walked vainly.

He walked proudly. He was strong, good-looking and successful. A man among men!

Up went his ambitions like the Woolworth tower with a huge electric display inside at the top. He would show the world! And the world for him was Eve.

He smiled at the absurd anger that Eve's fine clothes had aroused in him. Why, fine clothes were great things. He felt powerfully good in his own. It was much better to be in the procession—then one never had to explain things. Again Eve's practical soul shone triumphant.

He took a weird delight in shop windows. A little Japanese garden full of queer monsters and fascinating bridges caught his eye and he purchased it. At a furniture store he selected a monastery table and a huge Morris chair that he had dreamed about for years. He laid aside for himself a little Chinese rug with such blues as are seen in autumn skies. He left his name and requested that the things be kept in readiness for delivery at his new address.

It was simply absurd for a man on his salary to live in the tenements any longer. On Fifty-ninth Street he visited several spacious studios and selected one. He would move in on the first of the month. He should have had a studio ages ago. A telephone, too. It was insanity to cut one's self off from the world.

A tiredness was beginning to creep up his limbs. His new clothes were deadly tight and uncomfortable. His silk hose pulled in that heathenish manner that silk hose arrogate to themselves. He didn't feel at all flamboyant because his back ached and that wicked spot in his left shoulder ground painfully as though he had been drawing for hours. And he really hadn't been drawing at all. He had been having a wonderful shopping debauch like a female.

He looked up the five flights of tenement stairs with horror. How would he ever climb them even if the promised land were located on the roof. He lifted one heavy foot after the other.

When the door of "The Nest" slammed at last against the outside world he crumpled exhaustedly on the bed.

Hot tears gushed from his eyes. "I don't want to do stuff for a lot of boobs!" he sobbed, "I want to do big things—big wonderful things that'll startle the world—I don't want to be a clown at a circus!"

For a long time he lay quietly. Then he rose and went into the other room where his materials were spread out all over the tables and chairs.

"I can't go on doing this kind of rot! This isn't life to me, it's death!" And like an invading army he started on a foray of rack and ruin.

He tore a roll of shimmering white paper to bits; he emptied his black inks into the sink; the red inks, too, and they ran like blood; he cracked his brass-rimmed rulers across his knee and pitched the drawing board out into the alley below his windows.

"I'll never draw another line as long as I live! I'm through with every G— d— kind of art—I'm through!"

CHAPTER XXIX.

Every seat was taken. All "First Nighters" who happened to be in New York on June thirtieth were there. Haywood Broun, Woollcott, Dale and Sherwin had come for a great laugh. There had been innumerable stories in all the newspapers about Kerwin & Co., and Eve's picture smiled out at the world from a dozen first pages. Everybody knew that Jack Ritz had never written anything before and that his name was really Jake Rosenheim.

Margate had agreed to one-third of the profits and none of the glory. "The Fall of Sebastian" was the first play of an unknown author put on by an unknown producer. That made a good newspaper story and gave them for nothing, advertising that they could never have purchased for ten thousand dollars.

It is no secret that Ibsen took two years to write a play, but it is a great secret that most of the plays on Broadway are written in two days and put on after a rehearsal of two weeks.

That doesn't mean that Broadway hasn't difficulties. The difficulties are greater by reason of the short space of time in which to solve them. During the month that it took to write and stage Rosenheim's play, neither he nor Margate nor Eve slept unless it was during a stolen moment in street cars, buses or taxis. Rosenheim moved down to Margate's studio and together they shaped and tore apart and shaped again, ten thousand times, the words and the action of the play.

Poor, quiet Jake, who had never known excitement in his life, thin and pale and shakey.

Like all great undertakings there was no half course possible. Eve's nine hundred dollars that she had put by so painstakingly melted in one morning down on the East Side where she went from shop to shop and from home to home buying props that had really been born in Russia.

Margate's belief in the play was so great that he backed the proposition with his signature.

From the other side of the footlights everything seems so easy that it would do no good at all to describe the terrors that rage behind the asbestos curtain.

Even the best director obtainable in New York at the time did not entirely please Eve and the consequence was that after a short but pointed discussion, there was no director at all.

It was no uncommon thing for Margate to burst in and say: "Sadie, you take that speech of Sebastian's about religion and Sebastian you take your father's speech about money and father you disappear from this scene entirely."

Actors have a genius for these changes. They all know each others lines and playing baseball with a scene or two doesn't in any way upset the mime's equilibrium—that is, unless he gets superstitious and resigns. This, Sebastian did, and it took Eve's tears to bring him back into the fold.

The leading lady became ill two days before the opening and her understudy had to be pomelled into shape.

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children got out an injunction to prevent the cripples from appearing in the play and the United Jewish Charities kicked up

the dust for what they understood to be an untruthful representation of conditions on the East Side.

In describing "The Fall of Sebastian" one might say that it was the result of the Garden of Eden, crushed into four acts. Gertrude Shelby, a Broadway star, played Sebastian's sister, by far the most important role. Chatfield, an unknown "comer," offered his services as the lover. The Jewish stepmother, perhaps slightly overdrawn, forces the sister on the street to earn the money that she buries in a hole in the wall. The broken old father whose neurosis compels him to drive tacks all day and most of the night was done by a German from the Deutsches Theatre. Of course, the first man that the street-walker accosts turns out to be the man she loves.

Just how she isn't reformed; just how Sebastian falls in his gigantic efforts not only to save his own family but to change our political system are some of the intricacies that wound themselves in and out, back and through innumerable horrors to the end of the fourth act.

Eve and Margate and Rosenheim sat like three wooden Indians far back in a second story box. They were dazed with exhaustion. Their ears refused to hear. Their eyes refused to see. Their bodies refused to feel.

Young girls in Russian peasant costume twined in and out among the seats with trays of frozen fruit juice. It was a stifling hot night.

The curtain went up on a dubious and snickering audience that was suddenly shocked into silence by the absolute faithfulness portrayed in the tenement hallway. The stage was empty. The co-authors gave grudgingly to that audience because they knew their effects must be cumulative. There was a unanimous catch of breath as some chicken feathers twirled and blew and a gray alley cat

came out from behind a garbage can, stretched himself and disappeared through the window to a roof behind.

At the end of the first act there was a suppressed sneer. At the end of the third when the old father kills his second wife for wrecking the lives of his first wife's children, the most hardened ladies in the audience were weeping little biscuits of rouge and powder right down their cheeks, and when the curtain dropped on the fourth, there wasn't a millionaire in the house that would not momentarily have given every cent of his fortune to make the world a more beautiful place in which to play.

In an instant the whole audience was on its feet shouting and screaming, "Author! Author!" thundering their heels on the wooden floor like a stampede of Texas broncos. Then came a dusty stillness as though the ponies had trampled the world and passed on. The young Jew came timidly out from the wings.

It didn't matter what he said—nobody really listened. Everybody wanted to look at him and search personally for the sacred thing from which had sprung his stupendous play.

A sudden terror seized Eve's mind—the terror of success! The fear of being grabbed by the throat and hurled 'round and 'round and 'round and eventually choked to death by success. The fear that success would never give her a moment of personal happiness. The fear that success would never allow her to escape—even after death!

She slipped from the dark corner of her box down the steps of the side exit into the alley.

"Producer! Producer! We want the Producer! Kerwin! Kerwin! Kerwin & Company!"

Eve stopped, choking with excitement. Success already had her by the neck. It screamed into her ears. She felt

its tentacles tighten and tighten. Throwing back her head and laughing like a mad woman, she fled out of the alley into Broadway and down Broadway toward the Square.

CHAPTER XXX.

There was a warm summer drizzle dimming the window-panes and the street lamps, and a scared stillness that always precedes the near-midnight rush from the theatres.

The upper floors of all business houses were black. Through the shining plate-glass of first-floor lunch rooms and bakeries shone the low-powered night lights, the bare counters covered with yellow papers spread ready to receive their early morning load of hot buns, doughnuts, coffee-cake and pies.

As Eve rushed along each ray of light jumped out and slapped her in the face. Occasionally a night-watchman pressed his nose against a glass pane and stared at the fleeing figure. At one place an officer stepped out of a doorway and followed her for half a block.

The rain tumbled faster and she had no umbrella. Darting across the space in front of the Flat Iron Building she turned to the right and hurried into Fifth Avenue.

The world down there was painfully silent and dark but not too dark for Eve to see a large man struggling with an umbrella and a dog. The wind was set on getting the umbrella out of his hands.

After he passed, she felt him look back and something in her lower nerve centers registered the fact that his footsteps were not dying away as well-regulated footsteps going in the opposite direction are in the habit of doing.

Is it in accordance with some divine law that two people widely separated from each other, suddenly get an impulse to move and keep on moving until they collide?

And does the collision make the spark or is it merely the problem of impersonal matter and motion?

It is far more romantic to believe that it is the result of a careful order of bookkeeping in heaven.

Anyway—

Eve was young and very unhappy. According to habit, her lonely race through the rain would presently end with a gray maltese cat in an otherwise empty studio.

It is a perfectly shocking discovery how full of romance everybody is!

It had been beautiful and noble to weep alone through all the black nights but after all, being noble alone isn't any more fun than being a hurt little child crying without an audience.

So when Eve heard the footsteps growing distincter behind her she began to think very brave thoughts indeed. She even whispered some of them aloud: "I'm tired of tears; Stanley doesn't care; Stanley never cared; I want somebody to come into my life who can make me laugh! I want somebody who can bring me joy!" Perhaps her recklessness was the sort that comes galloping on after too great a strain.

There is no such thing as monotony even in the dullest life. Monotony is a state of mind, just as adventure is a state of mind. The folks with the natural adventure state of mind are the ones who make continuous history even if they never find a publisher.

The huge man had the adventure kind of mind. When he was a boy he loved lemons, but his people were very poor and lemons on a farm were a great luxury so he used to walk all the way in to the village store to have the sight of them make his mouth water. That was adventure enough to repay him for the blister on his heel.

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Eve had longed for adventure. Big adventure, like marrying Stanley Bird and making a great man out of him but the little homely adventures like baking a cake or sweeping a floor were set down in her mind as drudgery. She got into the human habit of looking through what was there in a struggle to find what wasn't there. Those things aren't really our fault so much as they are lack of humor in our ancestors.

Suddenly she remembered the great success of her play. She was a Broadway personality. She would be rich. She would put on more and more plays and that didn't seem to be what she wanted at all. Right there she laughed outright. It was all a huge joke played upon her by her ego. In that moment, most of the things done to her by her ancestors were straightened out and her belated sense of humor burst into being. It was all really great fun! Why hadn't she seen it before?

From heaven came a sudden cloudburst. The man with the umbrella and the dog rushed up and said: "Won't you come in out of the rain?"

"I haven't sense enough!" laughed Eve as she recognized his voice. "Oh, Mr. Philosopher Man, where have you been hiding yourself?"

He took hold of her hand and circled it somehow so that she found herself suddenly clinging to his arm. Meanwhile, the umbrella acting like a naughty child whose parent has relinquished supervision for a moment, flopped and bellied and shot inside out.

They stood there in the pouring rain laughing and struggling with the bent spokes. It flopped back but, alas, it was no longer any good as an umbrella.

Down toward the Square they proceeded, the man in-

sisting upon upholding the useless object much to the amusement of some people who slid by in a dry taxi.

"That's it—a taxi! A taxi! My kingdom for a taxi!" He whirled about in search of one but Eve turned him back.

"I'm ruined anyway, Mr. Philosopher Man, so what's the use spending money on me?"

Although she called him by the old name, all the old attitude had disappeared. He looked millions of years younger, but of course she had never really seen him in a good light before.

Every time they passed under a street lamp, she was as busy looking up as he was looking down and what she saw was the calm, determined face of a man who has settled down forever with the sweeter things of life. In his whole being there was no nervousness. No struggle. Just beauty and peace and helpfulness.

Eve was glad his shoulders were a little rounded, because it made her sure that even if it were lifted now, there had once been a weight.

There was a firmness in the way he directed her across the street. A few such men exist but the balance of male civilization either do not attempt to help a woman across at all or they push her or drag her.

A woman might trust a man with her whole future if he showed any brains about getting her across the street.

"Mr. Philosopher Man, why did you move away just when I needed you?"

"I didn't move away. I just didn't visit you any more."

"You mean that you never lived up in the Tenements?"

"Never!"

"What were you doing there every night?"

"Waiting for you."

"You very wicked man—how did you know I was there?"

"I saw you once by accident and after that I couldn't stay away—that is till I saw you were at the cross-roads, then I decided to let you be your own Baedeker."

"Where do you live?" asked Eve.

"Across the Square from you."

"How do you know where I live?"

"I know everything about you."

If Eve had not completely forgotten the first part of her evening, she might have remembered that she had called a rehearsal after the play and that the whole cast had been invited by Margate to a party at a big Broadway restaurant. If she had had any sense of proportion, she might have known that Jake Rosenheim, with a taxi chugging at the curb, was at that very moment almost knocking the little black letters off the sign of Kerwin & Company, Typists and Producers, at number Seventy-one Washington Square South.

She remembered nothing but that she was a sort of little pink-checked-apron-girl and that she was having a very funny time with an Irish looking knickerbockered-boy who had suddenly moved into the neighborhood of her heart and was getting acquainted over the back fence.

CHAPER XXXI.

It's all very well for moralists to point out the fact that a good looking young woman—separated but not divorced, has no right to be strolling about at all hours of the night, alone; certainly has no right to have young men coming to her studio whenever they feel like it; most positively has no right to be wearing a continuous orchid in her belt. But while ethicists are still fighting over what the word "right" really means, most young women of the modern school occupy the time taking a chance. Eve was ultra modern.

It was an early evening hour. Orchid in her belt. Young man kneeling on a Persian prayer rug at her feet.

"I love you," whispered the young man.

Of course that isn't a very new way of putting it, but, after all, tell me what *is* new?

If she had been less mother and more female she might have made a bit of fun, but she felt very sorry and very "mother," so she held on to his hands and smoothed back his hair. Of course nobody denies that that also is very old business.

"I love you, too," she answered.

The young man sprang to his feet. All young men do under the same circumstances. "Then you'll marry me!" he gulped.

"Not so fast," she answered. "Let's talk this serious business over—you don't love me that way. You're good and sweet and at the very beginning of your career—look

at those marvelous clippings!" She pointed to a mighty pile on the table beside them.

One might have been led to believe that the young man who stood trembling before Eve, was the one with the busted umbrella, but of course it was not that young man at all. It was Jack Ritz, alias Jake Rosenheim, whose play was the biggest thing New York had experienced in a long time and whose habitually empty pockets were beginning to bulge, bulge, bulge with shining gold.

Eve forced his attention to the pile of criticisms again. "Now you've succeeded, obviously because I believed in you sufficiently to risk almost nothing to put on your play. According to fiction your next move is to ask me to marry you. I'm twenty-six; you're twenty-one and oh! how many millions of years older than a man of twenty-one is a woman twenty-six! And then to add to the difficulties I'm already married."

"But you know you haven't seen your husband for over two years and for all you know he may be dead."

"Now, Jack, you think you hope he is dead but you really don't hope anything of the sort. I couldn't marry you—I don't love you that way any more than you love me that way—why it's all too ridiculous. Let's make a bargain."

Somehow though his enthusiasm had almost burst the thermometer a few moments before, now it was obviously sprinting downward.

"All right," he muttered, "what's the bargain?"

Eve began to toll off the items on her left palm with the index finger of her right hand. "Good! First, no more orchids—lovely, but what's the use? If you insist that my style of beauty demands them, I'll leave an order with my florist to send me a daily decoration. Next! We

are going to get after another play at once. Third! I'm going to be just like I was—your mamma-sister-friend!"

"All right," he said doggedly, but Eve detected a suspicion of relief in his tone.

"Bless its little buttons and buttonholes," she said, glancing over his shoulder at the clock. The curtain is up on the two hundredth performance of its great play and here it is in Washington Square making love to a concrete wall. I'll race you all the way to the theatre!"

Nobody minded the clatter down the stairway as nobody in New York minds anything and nobody even looked at them as they went tearing across the Square and through the Arch, excepting a big man with Irish blue eyes. He was sitting on a bench in a dark corner holding an airedale in his lap.

CHAPTER XXXII.

There are certain things in life that leave a sort of blank-blotting-paper-effect on the human soul. Not the least of these is refusing to marry somebody—especially when you're lonely.

Does one then wish to marry the man whom one has just refused? Certainly not! But just at that moment one realizes that one wishes to marry somebody!

The play had been running for months. All through the summer, hot and sticky, there wasn't even one vacant seat that the weary author and the weary producer might squeeze in together.

The weary author found himself besieged by requests for plays, but always he hid behind the fact that he was signed up body and soul with Kerwin & Company.

The weary author, heretofore all artistic and un-Jewish in the matter of business, acquired a little machine and moved grandma, aunts, cousins, uncles, sisters and brothers from the house in Harlem to a nice old place on Lexington Avenue. Also it was said that he had been seen fumbling with things that he called stocks and bonds.

The little firm of Kerwin & Company got into the "Personality" column and Eve was pigeonholed beside Mary Elizabeth and Olive Shriener and other great women of the age.

Authors, long-haired, authors, short-haired, authors successful and unsuccessful swarmed stickily about number Seventy-one Washington Square South. They brought wheelbarrows full of manuscripts as though the mere fact

of their being copied by Kerwin & Company might in some electrical way start them along the shimmering path to Forty-second and Broadway.

Eve had a Corn Exchange checking account and a sensible Greenwich Savings Bank account, but no stocks and bonds. She had an idea they sounded too time-absorbing.

There were ten new typewriters and ten new typists. They now occupied the entire loft below Eve's studio and the rattling machines through the none too thick flooring shouted "Money! Money! Money!" and after that more success and then more success again.

Little Miss Gumbiner developing into the ablest of managers, moved her struggling mother and father, aunts, uncles, cousins, brothers and sisters from their various tenements on Rivington Street to a brown stone front in Harlem. Moses, her baby brother, resigned his position as office boy and went back to high-school.

December again and things inside Eve's heart were the same. Success, money and monotony except for the one glorious moment each day when she opened the papers and studied Stanley's cartoons. She loved the way he signed his name—just the little sparrow in the right-hand lower corner.

For the balance of the twenty-four hours—loneliness—loneliness.

It was evening. She stood at her window looking out over the deserted square. What a buzz it had been all summer. What a human picture; and now what silence and what a twilight! What a moment if Stanley should come to her and take her in his arm. She rehearsed all the things he would say to her. First he would tell her that it was she who had made him great. She would then proceed playfully to deny this and he would insist

that if she hadn't actually made him great, she had had brains enough to leave him so that he might make himself great.

And she wasn't faking this emotion of martyrdom. She truly felt like Savonarola and Joan of Arc and Jesus Christ rolled into one and reincarnated.

Patiently she waited but nothing happened. Finally she turned her back on the Square and lost herself in the warm beauty of her rooms. All those soft rugs, all that dull old mahogany greeted her with an affectionate harmony. She lighted the alcohol lamp under the kettle and brewed herself a cup of tea.

Loneliness is an indefinite sort of misery; the sort that would welcome with enthusiasm a knife turned round in the heart—anything, O Lord, to vary the monotony!

And then on the other hand it becomes a sort of statuesque joy. How we court it! How we love it! How we nourish it! When just around the corner perhaps is another lonely somebody who could easily be induced to change the map of the world for us.

She sat sipping her tea and looking intently at Stanley's cartoons. They had grown to be somehow different. They were unsteady. The little bird in the corner didn't have quite the usual number of tail feathers. Something was wrong. She had known it for a long time without admitting it. Something was happening to him! Then suddenly with the belief that he was calling to her all across the city, she jerked on her hat and coat and rushed out to him.

Blindfolded she might have found her way to his tenement. That tenement that had been such a glorious hope for them such a little while ago.

She did not stop to ring the down-stairs bell. Impos-

sible oceans could not have swamped her passion. She flew up the winding stairway and knocked on his door. It gave back a ghostly, unfurnished sound. She knocked again. The little card holder above the bell was empty. Oh, well, that didn't matter; he probably didn't want his name there. Perhaps he had moved into a more prosperous tenement. That was it exactly! Why should he remain in the cheap one when he was making such a lot of money.

She raced down the stairs to look at all the names on the mail boxes. It was too dark to read them and she had no matches.

If only Marj hadn't got ill and moved away to the mountains! She would have known all about him. She became frantic with unformulated fears. Now that she had given in to her unworthy mood and returned to him, all the tiger in her being was aroused to search out his hiding place.

The only thing left was to ring the manager's bell and ask. Her trembling legs wobbled beneath her. It was a hard thing to do under the circumstances but not half so hard as not finding him now that the ache had slashed through her determination to leave him alone.

The manager was out and the janitor was a new janitor. There was no Mr. Bird living in the tenements—in fact there hadn't been since his advent and that was more than six months ago.

She dragged herself across to the Second Avenue car. Her picture of him had flown from the frame. She was confused. As long as he appeared to her comfortable and happy and successful in the place where she had known him, he was real to her. Now when she no longer knew where he was, she couldn't even see his face.

All the way back to the Square she kept her eyes closed,

struggling somehow to imagine his features. An old spiritualist had once told her that so long as you can see the face you can send a message. When the face disappears, then the silver thread is severed.

She could not see his face. She knew what kind of hair he had of course; light gold and unruly like a little boy's. He wore it brushed back from his brow and it blew in the wind. He had an obstreperous cowlick on the left side. His eyes? Why, of course, they were blue. His nose, his chin—certainly she could see each feature distinctly, but when she molded them together they fled into nothingness.

"Oh, Stanley, I need you! I need you!" she moaned, when suddenly an imp from the unconscious arose and whispered: "Not so much as you imagine!"

She had not seen the Philosopher Man since the night of the rain storm but that was her fault. He had told her that he would wait until he was bidden.

Often she sat at her windows and gazed across at his windows, but the cup of tea that she had promised to offer him had never been steeped.

If it weren't for women, prayers would have to go out of business. It is distinctly feminine to kneel on the cold hard floor and plead for impossibilities. The masculine says: "Damn!" and goes out after what he wants.

Now, advanced women like Eve do not kneel on the cold hard floor because that would be submitting to something and far be it from an advanced woman to submit to anything—even God. They pray, perhaps, but they do not start "O God!" because God as a worker of miracles has too many times gone into bankruptcy.

Eve walked 'round and 'round the Square and then diagonally across and then in and out the various paths

praying indefinitely for something to happen, and pretending that she didn't even suspect what that something was. All the time she knew perfectly well that no matter how many miles she walked in circles she would eventually draw up and ring the Philosopher Man's bell.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

We always pretend to ourselves that we wish we hadn't come—that's our very last obeisance to Mrs. Grundy. Truth is we are simply tickled to death that we ventured even if we break our necks.

Eve was bowed in by a Japanese servant and told to make herself happy. The funny little yellow man said that Mr. Casey had left word that when she came she was to have tea and a folio of prints to look at and then she was to wait until he returned.

The funny little yellow man offered her a squashy big mulberry velvet chair, put a blue cushion under her feet, placed a tea table beside her and served tea in Gold Medallion so encrusted with gentlemen, blue-birds, butterflies and roses that it must have taken a brush to cleanse them properly.

Eve was furious at Mr. Casey's assurance that she would come to him, but, after all, she was there and that made being furious look ridiculous, so she laughed and the funny little yellow man smiled sympathetically, lighted a coral lamp over her head, gave her the folio of prints and disappeared.

The blue Chinese rug on the floor was so thick that it felt like quicksand. Eve looked around the Philosopher Man's home without getting up from her chair.

There was a frame sunk in the north wall and the picture in it was the only one in the huge room.

There were three windows across the front and the

middle one was led up to by some hand carved steps, at the top of which rested a little Chinese temple, just framing the trees and the stars of the Square.

"I hope I haven't kept you waiting very long," said Mr. Casey, coming noiselessly across the rug toward her.

"Oh, not very," laughed Eve. "I've been enjoying this room. Sort of fun finding out what kind of a man you really are."

"And have you found out?" he inquired seriously, his Irish eyes laughing.

"I'm not so sure. You have Oriental taste even down to your servants, but so many of you artistic New York folks have, that that alone means nothing."

"But I'm not in the least artistic—I'm a dog trainer—Here! Anatole France!" he called and a whimsical looking airedale danced into the room.

"This is the canine gentleman you have met before, but he is just one of forty. Now we won't do our tricks but we are very highly educated." He patted the dog and sent him out of the room.

"You mean you are a real dog trainer, Mr. Casey, Philosopher Man?" asked Eve.

"A real, real dog trainer!" he answered, "Come up into my temple with me where we can see the night and I will tell you all about myself." He took Eve's two hands in his and pulled her to her feet.

Eve held back. "First I want to know if you are really married?"

"Not yet."

"Then you're engaged?"

"At present—yes—in an amusing conversation with you."

"Mr. Casey, you know perfectly what I mean."

"Indeed I do, but I haven't the slightest intention of satisfying you. A woman is never so interesting as when she is curious and to satisfy her at once would mean a joy with an amputated head. I am holding all guillotines in reserve."

Why do people always go home regretting when they spill over their confidences? It's so human, so natural, so like what everybody else on earth does. Everybody spills over, if not in *your* presence then you may be sure it is done when you aren't listening—there are no supermen.

They went up into the temple and sat down on a soft rug and looked out over the Square and Eve began at the beginning and told everything right through to the end.

"Then if you loved your husband, why did you leave him?"

"Because his success meant more to me than anything in the world."

"Then you didn't love him."

"I don't understand."

"Quite simple. You loved what he represented to you—that is, you loved being married to a genius. When he proved to be ungenius, you fled. To give him a chance is what you told yourself but really it was to give yourself less trouble. Your first mistake was in marrying when neither of you were passionately in love."

"We were great friends. That's a better foundation than passion."

"Words, mere words, my dear. It's difficult enough to make a go of things when you start on a premise of not being able to do without each other. When you dive, cool

and calm, you miss the madness that dims the great shock at the beginning.

After that he sat silently watching her. Through the set stare in her eyes, anybody might have seen the sprouting of an idea.

"Well," she said finally, "I've never thought about that side of it before. Nobody has ever talked to me like this. All I know is that I've been utterly wretched all through my success and I thought that wretchedness was my longing for Stanley. Now you happen along and make me out a fool instead of a martyr."

He got up suddenly from the step and put his big arm around her and patted her far shoulder, "Not a bit of it. There is a part of you that loves him and wants to do things for him. But that's the mother in you—everybody has that, even men. I've got it strong, that's why I keep the two airedales and a Jap valet. But you really don't want a man-baby, you want a baby-baby—in fact a whole bouquet of baby-babies—now don't you?"

Eve was very tired. Just at that moment she didn't look like Kerwin & Company at all but just like a plain woman who has drunk her fill of the artistic world and longs to lie back in the arms of a competent business man and sleep for a million years.

A tragic output of this generation of transition, she longed with half her heart to march forward and perform all the radical feats that had ever been written about. She wanted her success, fought for and won without the help of anybody. She wanted her independence, her freedom! And the other half of her heart raced back one million years in search of the superb male to dominate her and

give her by way of largess, babies and babies and then more babies!

That's exactly why no more girls should be born for another hundred years. In another hundred years, women will be free! There won't be any marriages. There won't be any social stigma because of miss-steps. Miss-steps will be a new sort of grace. A baby will be the supremest gift to the State and the State will see to it that women who bear them are properly worshipped. There will be changes—Oh, innumerable changes of affection without so much laceration. Some laceration of course because human beings will always have pity and generosity and goodness in abundance. But females will be like males and admit it too. The old order will pass and history will be at great pains to go back and write of the barbarism of our present marital relations.

Eve began to cry. Eves always do that or run when they want to be loved. It all depends upon the Adam in the proximity. Eve knew that this particular Adam would let her run—alone, so she sat still and wept.

"Mr. Philosopher Casey Man—please don't think me a fool—I—I—" and she sobbed comfortably and deeply on his shoulder.

"Such an adorable little fool! Don't you think you ought to laugh yourself to death at the mere fact that my name is Casey? I do, at least every morning and that keeps me in good gay spirits for the balance of the twenty-four hours."

Well, it is funny to think that I—" she hesitated and he finished the sentence for her, "could be interested in a man with a name like Bob Casey."

"Well, not exactly, but something on that order."

"Evelet, there's everything in a name. Think of having to fight the birth-right of Bob Casey! It simply can't be done, so I capitalized it! First!, Bob Casey's lemonades when I was six; then Bob Casey's home-laid eggs when I was eleven; Bob Casey's airedales when I was eighteen and ever since. Why a name like that is the biggest advertising boomerang a fellow ever had. All the Irish come to see my show because they love me and all the rest come because they hate the Irish."

"Are you still a vaudeviller?" she asked wiping her eyes on his handkerchief.

"Heavens, no! Stopped that four years ago. Got three companies on the road though. "Casey's Airedales," giving two shows a day on good circuits and sending me in a weekly check big enough to allow me to settle down and enjoy art."

"Do you really like pictures?" she asked, looking about the high walls, bare except for the one exquisite landscape that melted into the background rather than hung on it.

"Like pictures?" he walked down the temple steps and over toward his treasure. "Love pictures, I should rather remark—don't you see this?"

"Yes, but you've just got one. Seems to me if you loved them you'd have a great lot—your walls here could hold fifty with comfort."

He put his hand to his forehead and wailed "Fifty pictures to live with! I'd prefer a harem. At least you could kick forty-nine ladies without materially spoiling their value—but fifty pictures! Come here!" He disappeared into a dark opening and turned on a high-powered light.

Eve followed and there on little shelves were arranged pictures of every size, variety and value. Some framed,

some unframed, some canvases not even nailed on stretchers.

"This is my store house. I hang one picture at a time. I live with it, not till I'm tired but till I've made it a part of me and then I accept an introduction to another. It's like a lady—I'd get confused if I had to live with more than one at a time."

Eve didn't quite understand his viewpoint but she had a hot desire to fly across the Square and snatch down a few of her own before he got the chance to see them hanging in vivid battalions on every inch of usable wall-space.

He led the way out of his storehouse, looked at his watch then dropped it back into his vest pocket. He wore neither fob nor chain.

"I'm not questioning my watch to send you home but to see if it's late enough to go somewhere."

Eve got a sudden vision of marble and gilt cabarets and shuddered. "I'd just rather go home I think—I don't like restaurants much—the noise makes my head ache."

"Not my kind of restaurant. I'll take you somewhere nice and still. Come on in here and powder your nose and put a little rouge on. You've wept yours all into my handkerchief."

He opened a little box labelled: "Don't be extravagant" and left her alone.

"You're evidently accustomed to having female visitors," she called in to him as she daubed her cheeks.

"Oh yes, quite!" he called back.

"All as nice as me?" she risked again, brushing back her hair and then pulling a few careless looking fluffs around her face.

"Yes, and some nicer, and very few as slow making up!"

Eve laughed. She felt very female and joyous. Very dependant and expectant and in that small moment when she faced him in his large studio again she had unconsciously decided a number of momentous issues.

She put on her hat and started into the hallway. At the top of the stairs she turned and said: "Once I visited a man in this building when I first went in business for myself and I was so unhappy I hated the place, but I like it now."

"I'm very glad and I know I shall like your house, too, even unto the millions of pictures crowded on your walls."

Eve felt suddenly naked before him. How did he know she had millions of pictures? If he could see like that a whole block away, then he must know other mysterious things! Again she felt like fleeing before he saw into her mind.

At the bottom of the stairs he took her arm. "Now haven't you millions of pictures and didn't you long to pull them down before I found out? Honest? Truth?"

"Well—yes I did—but only at first. I know now that it would have been dreadful if I had done it because I love millions of pictures on my walls."

"And you shall always have millions of pictures on your walls!"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"Good evening, Mr. Casey!"

The waitresses all smiled at him and greeted him by name. That's worth a million dollars a minute to a lonely bachelor in New York.

"Good evening, Clara," said Mr. Casey, as he pulled out the heavy flemish oak chair for Eve to slide into.

Theatrical Bohemia doesn't count. Serious Bohemia subdivides itself: First the dingy, unsuccessful and struggling Bohemia that is perhaps too honest like the folks around Washington Square, and next the successful dears who pay dues at great clubs about town and still long in their secret hearts to be invited to tea at the Belmonts.

It was into the heart of this group of artists-arrived that Bob Casey introduced Eve.

The club was shining and proper like an excellent hotel—only much nicer. The people were well dressed and clean and too aesthetic to handle money before each other in the dining room. They paid by signing little slips of yellow paper.

In Washington Square also, they don't handle money before each other but for a different reason—they haven't it to handle.

Casey ordered without a menu. That always gives a casual air to expenditures and Eve liked it. She was happy—much happier than she had been since she stumbled into New York.

"Clara, give us some of those puffy little soufflé things with fresh mushrooms and bits of white chicken and a

plain salad with the dressing I like and some coffee."

"What a charming place!" beamed Eve. "I've been invited so many times and I've always refused—didn't think it would interest me."

"And it does?"

"Perhaps because you didn't invite me, you simply took me!"

"That *does* make a difference with a woman. I like the place. It's somehow sweet. It's well got up but not offensive and it represents things achieved. It is bourgeois Bohemia. Of course it has its comical side but so have funerals."

Someone came toward them from the other end of the long dining room.

"Oh, Mr. Shults!" called Casey, and Shults stopped jerkily like a "Hoch der Kaiser!" before his superior officer. "Miss Kerwin, may I present Mr. Shults. Mr. Shults, this is my very dear friend, Miss Kerwin, and I warn you, Miss Kerwin, not to get on the Teutonic situation as Mr. Shults has strong ideas."

"I promise not to argue," said Eve, and Shults was coaxed into a seat beside them and given a stein of beer as a peace offering.

The soufflé things came and so did a man named Baker and a Scotch sculptor man and a cameo-faced woman with a lovely daughter.

Another table was pushed up and more food ordered and they argued and came to conclusions and argued some more till the waitresses went home and the night-watchman gently but firmly turned off all the lights.

Through the long galley they straggled, criticising, complimenting, tearing to pieces the world of art spraddled out on its walls and with criss-crossed hand-shakes


and confused good-nights, Eve and Casey came out on the Nineteenth Street side and wandered down toward the Square.

What was the use in arguing with the thrill that shot through her every time he took her arm. It was like arguing with the Twinge—it would eventually get the best of her. The thrill was there and it was delightful and she was tired of analyzing the joy right out of things.

But the mind of the dog-trainer was busy on another trail. He wanted to be married. He was actually hunting for a mate, not to the exclusion of other sports but rather as a side issue. He liked little dogs—matter of fact he loved them, but principally because he learned through them how much nicer little babies would be.

He wanted a lot of babies—mostly girls, he believed, with tall pink taffeta bows standing up over their left ears and stiff white pinafores coming somewhere above the knees. He never figured that there were colics and measles and whooping cough leading up to the pinafore age and school books and beaux and heart aches leading down from it. He saw them all around his dinner table and the emotional joy in that was sufficient without going into details. In just the same slipshod way, he admitted that he wanted a half dozen or so of boys but he didn't want too many. That was all he was certain about—he didn't want too many but a half dozen or so wouldn't make much difference one way or the other.

His ambitions can be forgiven by more conservative and far-sighted persons when it is remembered that his emotions had been attuned since his eighteenth year to a rollicking litter of pups. And though pups only wear leather collars they somehow get you in line for pink taffeta bows.



Now the thing that worried Casey was the woman who was clinging rather heavily to his arm as they walked in silence down the by-ways and highways into Fifth Avenue.

She wanted to be loved—in fact she was just waiting to be loved and he felt himself skidding. Not that he hadn't admired other women, but other women didn't have that unconscious desire for an orphan asylum that Eve had. She was mother, mother, mother, nearly all through. That's why she was making such a success as a producer. Producing was her real business in life. That's why she had mothered the artist-man. That's why, ever to be happy, though she didn't know it, she must have babies and babies and more babies.

But there were several stone walls in the way. First, she was married and her husband was either dead or alive. In the latter case he didn't matter but in the former he very much did matter.

No man, not even a successful dog trainer, could ever hope to prove better than a dead artist. But in case the dead artist were alive! Ah, then, he knew of a competitive scheme by which the live artist might come to wish himself dead. Women adore choosing between things if for no other reason than eternally to regret the one they didn't take.

It was nearly daylight when Eve entered her studio and locked the door against the outside world.

Her heart had sung ten millions joyous tunes on that journey back from the big Club, and it was not as though she had been with him for eight hours but for ten million years to match the ten million joyous tunes in her heart.

There was a contrasting shot of pain across the joyous

tunes but she couldn't think what it was—she didn't want to think what it was.

Mechanically her clothes came off and hung themselves in their proper places. A night gown slipped over her head, the day-bed unmade itself and tucked her in and there she lay flat on her back with her eyes staring up through the sky-lighted roof into heaven.

The corner of her pillow sank softly and a little fluffy ball settled down under her ear and purred understandingly.

It was Kittums! Before Eve realized what she was doing, she nearly squeezed the little being into breathlessness.

Any less human cat would have flown into distance, but Kittums merely stood up, shook herself out, stretched and settled down again.

"Kittums, I've got a great heap to tell you."

"Rumble, rumble, rumble," from Kittums' purr center.

"You're absolutely the only person I can trust."

"Rumblety, rumblety, rumblety," deep down from Kittums' conceit generator.

"You see, it's this way. I've met a man." The rumbling came to a sudden period. "I knew you'd feel that way but you needn't because it doesn't at all mean that I'm going to do anything desperate. I merely want to talk it over with you to get it clear in my own head. That's the only reason humans ever talk things over—they want to convince nobody but themselves." The rumbling started up again with an extra little whistle on the end of each rumble.

"Now, Kittums, you know how I feel about Stanley." And then the pain that had been shooting across her happiness made itself understood and she buried her face in

the soft pillow. The wall that she had been building to protect herself and her love for him cracked from end to end and fell with a loud crash, and the tears that she had stored, flooded through, destroying all the hills and valleys of peace that had looked so secure but a moment before.

Kittums crawled up close but Eve sobbed more and more miserably. "Stanley I want you, I want you—I don't care how miserable you make me—I want you—"

CHAPTER XXXV.

In the stifling waiting room at St. Lukes' Hospital, Eve ran hurriedly over her friendship with Marj Prouty. She remembered with more than a sudden pain the generous way in which Marj had accepted her upon her arrival in New York. With an elaborate vow that she would see Marj every day, rain or shine, and nurse her back to health, she followed the poker-faced nurse up to Marj's room.

Eve was very gay with Marj. It was the brave human refusal to accept a hideous reality. "Well Marj, dear, when did you come? Did you enjoy the mountains? Where is The Shepherd? How long will you be here?" and all the while she was pleading with herself inwardly to ask an entirely different set of questions.

"I—came—a week ago," whispered Marj, the breath jerking sharp as though (the machinery below refusing to work any longer) it rose from the tip-top of her lungs.

"Fine!" said Eve in that boisterous manner people adopt when they are sitting viz-a-viz with death. "We'll get you out of here in a few weeks and then you can come down to the studio and stay with me—The Shepherd, too—you know I'm disgustingly rich, or will be soon and I have two whole floors at Number Seventy-one on prospects."

"I know—we heard—my Shepherd told me—but I'll never leave here—I'm going to die."

The hideous fact was written beyond doubt on Marj's little face but it is a conventional attitude that the sufferer should be in ignorance. Eve was riotously shocked.

"Marj, dear—you mustn't talk that way—why you—"

But the little claw hand crept out of the covers and clutched at Eve's rounded palm. "Eve, there is no chance." The pale eyes closed with exhaustion or went perhaps for a moment's glimpse into the hereafter. "They've told me—you see—it's not only consumption—it's that horrible anaemia thing—no hope—doctors don't know anything about it—except that it kills. They've told me—last night I would have thrown myself out of the window—I'm half dead already—the window is high—I—I couldn't reach it."

"But Marj, dear, we want you here—I—." What else could Eve say.

"Please, Eve, don't set your strong thoughts against mine—I want to die—to die before my Shepherd comes here tonight—and I want you to help me die—otherwise—I would not have sent for you—I know you hate ugly sights—those lovely roses—let me smell them—pansies see, and red roses have souls—"

Away into the distance she went again and Eve sat holding the little hot hand—her own fingers steady and bewilderingly calm in the face of so much tragedy.

"What time, Eve?" she asked reaching for the flowers that had dropped to her breast.

"Quarter of four, dear—can I do something for you?"

"Help me to die at four—everybody's helping—I've asked them all to help. You know, Eve, I'd be patient if there was any hope, but it's only a matter of days now and I want to quit—if I don't my Shepherd will die, too—he wasn't made to stand—this—this sort of thing."

"I'll help, dear!" said Eve, clutching the little hand in her own and pressing on her brain to make it think but one thing—death—death—death!

Marj closed her eyes and moved her lips in a last effort to say something.

Eve leaned over with her ear close to Marj's lips. "Pansies—see—and red—red roses—have souls."

Then a sigh, so hard that it seemed to strain up to God—that was all.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Eve and Casey had gone up into the Temple again. Suddenly out of the stillness came his philosophy of life. "I love everything; I love everybody; my parents were happy so how can I help it? I love little things most of all and little babies most of all little things; I've succeeded because I've never once waited for anything marvelous to happen; I wasn't fed on fairy tales so I don't believe in luck—that is, not much; I just went on doing the nearest thing at hand so jobs wouldn't accumulate. That's why a farm's good training—you simply have to do insignificant chores all the time. I don't discount my beautiful health and my beautiful boyhood—they were assets and the fellow who gets anywhere without them is a mystery to me. I'm going to start out tomorrow and find Stanley Bird and if I don't find him I'm going to get you a divorce by default and then I'm going to marry you and we'll buy a place near New York where your long right arm can reach your work and your short left one nearest the heart, can pet your babies—"

If Eve had been more female and less aesthete she might have scented the cry of sex in her aching sob and her lonely wail for her husband: "Stanley, I want you—I don't care how miserable you make me—I want you!"

If she had been more female and less aesthete she might have known that she didn't want Stanley at all but Bob Casey! Casey, with his great broad shoulders and his great broad humor. Casey, made to be father of many as she was made to be mother of many. Casey, whose

quiet manner covered the power to bend her, twist her, break her if he wanted to—Casey, superb, Casey, dominating. Casey—male!

He wanted Eve. The call of love was hungry in his throat and Eve, like the female of the species, was ready to dash down the mountain side, tear her flesh in the bracken, swim the icy water, stagger along weary and famished—anything, so that she might answer that call!

In the million years that elapsed during the second before Eve was crushed against him, she might have imagined that she felt the press of certain puritanical duties, certain compunctions of conscience concerning her husband. But nothing is better designed to stifle such absurdities in women than the powerful arms of another man and especially if the other man is where he can use those arms and the husband is not.

In such cases there are terrible regrets when the woman is alone again. Intricate arguments against any further acquaintance with the other man—certain little concessions to formulae, when all the time she is perfectly sure that she will answer again when he calls to her even across so wide a desert as Washington Square!

Eve moved quietly out of Casey's arms so that she might have the infinite pleasure of tumbling into them again.

She said: "There are lots of things that we must discuss—we—"

"We what?" asked Casey abruptly.

Eve stood silent against a pillar of the Temple like some dark figure collecting evidence.

Again Casey said: "What?"

"Oh so much!" she whispered excitedly, pressing her palms together in an effort to force the words into her tongue. "So much—I've no divorce—my husband—I

can't marry you unless I'm free—Stanley—perhaps he needs me still—perhaps—”

The man who has once stirred the woman he wants is foolish not to keep on stirring her, at least until she is so well mixed that she can no longer say: “This I regret—this I do not—this is wrong—this is right!”

Casey reached out and drew her towards him. He kissed the velvet under her chin and then pressing his lips hard against hers, held her close till the tenseness in her body relaxed and she gave way contentedly in his arms.

“What?” he asked again.

“Bob, dear, there hasn't ever been anything like this before—but Stanley—you've got to help me—what if he wants me again?”

“You don't want him again, do you?”

“One part of me does.”

“Now look here, Evelet, do be sensible and drop all this neurotic stuff. You lived with him long enough to know that you were both miserable—am I right?”

“Yes.”

“Well life ought to be more gracious than to thrust you into each other's way again. Life's just full of purposes—great beautiful purposes, if people would only not meddle with them. I'm gong down to the *American* tomorrow and talk it over with him myself. I'll guarantee that he'll allow you to get a God-fearing divorce for adultery. Why there's no reason why we shouldn't have one of those little persons for you to fondle in less than a year from now.”

“You travel too fast, Bobbo!” she laughed, picking up his great hand and pretending to bite a finger off. “Maybe we'd better adopt one and then we'd be sure that at least it

didn't have a hare-lip." She tiptoed and kissed his chin.

"Adopt fiddlesticks! you're going to bear them. The nearest you'll come to adoption is "Twilight Sleep!" He kissed her again.

"Meanness!" she said.

"Meanness or no meanness, that's what's going to happen. Now about Stanley, I honestly think he doesn't want you any more—no criticism, of you, dear—I like a lioness-lady, but for a man like Stanley, timid, artistic, imaginative—why a woman like you drives him crazy. All on earth a fellow like that can do when he marries a cyclone is to quit work and hide in a closet where he won't be torn to shreds when she blazes by. Different with me. I love cyclones! Am I right—tell me?" He made her look up at him. "Am I?"

"You're right," she said, and looked away from him. "Women like me are always that way. We've got to work; we've got to make our husbands work. We've got to run them if they'll let us and when they're fine fellows and just humanly weak like Stanley, they just quit. Poor dear, all he wanted perhaps was to be let alone."

"His work proves that—doesn't it?" asked Casey.

"It's not so good as it was. Something's been happening to him—Oh God help us and this business of making a success of ourselves!"

"Your own work, Evelet, I want you to keep it going—some of it, the worthwhile part but from now on I want Miss Gumbiner to run that typewriting business alone. Give her not only half the profits but twenty-five a week besides, that'll relieve you and if I hear of you getting up again any day before noon, I'll divorce you!"

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"Cream, please, and no sugar. Cream is nourishing but sugar is a chemical poison. I hope Miss Kerwin, that you don't eat sugar!"

Is there anything in the calendar of human events that bridges distances like a tea table? The person who invented it should long ago have got the Nobel Prize.

Eve answered her guest carefully. Taking sugar seemed to amount to so criminal an offence in his eyes, that her acknowledgement of it might be the end of him and all his ideals. "Well—I do occasionally take sugar but I won't if you say it's bad for me."

He was a tall miss-shapen man with quick ferret eyes that always seemed to be escaping pursuit. His shoulders were on the bias and his under teeth stood so far out beyond his upper ones that it gave him, along with his clumps of yellow hair, the aspect of a weary camel. Camels are very pathetic. They look like a wicked mistake for which they are eternally apologizing.

Poor camel-man! He sat with his battered cap in one hand and a voluminous manuscript in the other.

He seemed confused about the cup of tea because he hadn't a third hand.

"Do put your cap down and drink your tea—let me have your cap."

He glared unspeakable things at her and stuffed his cap behind him in his chair: "You don't take lemon, Miss Kerwin! Lemon turns the tannin into poison—it makes the lining of your stomach like leather."

All the lemons that Eve had ever taken with tea began

to parade before her and she could actually feel how brown she was inside. "Well you know, Mr. Culpepper, I used to be awfully germy and all that but I've had so much work to do in the past few years that I'd almost forgotten. I surely will not take lemon if you think it's as bad as all that—have some cookies?"

"Heavens, no!" he gasped, at the same time deftly extracting a little tissue paper package from his pocket. He opened it: "Have some health bread—I always carry it with me—nuts and raisins—quite a meal in itself!"

Eve struggled around with the tasteless stuff and then hid it under her napkin and retrograded to cookies.

"Have one more cup, Mr. Culpepper, and then tell me about the manuscript." Eve filled his cup and he sipped it tenderly.

"You want me to make a final copy, Mr. Culpepper?"

"Oh dear, no! I do my own typing. Always wonder how a person can trust a final copy to an outsider—so important, the final copy—so much more important than the original draft—one might trust that—well, to almost anyone." He began to shuffle through the loose leaves, "I want you to publish my play—it is called 'The Breath of God.'"

"But I'm not a publisher. Don't know the first thing about it and haven't any money to risk."

"Well, I thought you'd be willing perhaps to risk, say five hundred dollars, to get enough copies to give the reviewers and then if they said it was good, somebody would print more and then for your five hundred I'd give you half interest in the production of it. It's a great play if anybody had enough imagination—it's a great play."

Eve promised to read it. Many another woman would have laughed in his face. All the way down the steps

he kept looking back at her with his camel-face and urging her to look into the matter carefully.

She almost pushed him out so anxious was she to be alone again with all the unhappy mysteries that clouded her brain. Stanley had disappeared. Nobody knew where he was. His comics had been continued by another artist for ages past. Thinking back she could remember distinctly the change. She got down her scrap book and turned at once to the very last thing that Stanley had done. The new man's work she jerked out and burned in the grate.

Of course she was glad that Bobbo had managed it all so well, but with the granting of the quick divorce and the severing of her life with Stanley, there arose a great blot across the white scheme of things. Came the aching knowledge that no matter what success she might have, no matter how many exquisite children she might bear, no matter how much she loved that new husband, there would always stand out clear and defined and big, that unsatisfied love for Stanley.

Psychologists declare that people never recover from nipped emotions, from wounds to inflated egos. Here was one thing that Eve had failed to accomplish! Isn't it in the human order of things that the one big task that we fail to accomplish should sting us into everlasting remembrance of it?

She was free. The courts had said so. She might do as she pleased, live as she pleased, and yet she was wretched. It was a Jonah and the whale sensation of having been swallowed up and then given a space in which to walk where the air wasn't good. Her breaths all came thickly and seemed to hurt half way up. Bobbo had got tired of her moods and had gone away cruising. She was to fight

it out alone. Her legs were leaden ; her head a battlefield of emotions—the terror of indecision was upon her.

Maddened by the necessity of escaping from herself, she picked up the camel-man's play.

At ten, at twelve, at two, at four she was still turning the pages. At six, she snapped off the lights and raised the curtain to the valiant August sun.

At seven she had read the last word. There was no longer pity in her soul for him but profound genuflection before his genius. Who was he? Where had he come from? Had he ever written anything before? Who was she that such a treasure should have tumbled straight from heaven into her trembling hands!

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Had not the camel-man come loping across the wastes with health bread in his pockets and 'a marvelous play in his hands, Eve might have had a nervous breakdown.

Under the spell of "The Breath of God," she didn't have the time. It was after the Lanes had accepted it that she sent a note to Mr. Ames asking for an interview.

Up the thick carpeted stairway she climbed to his private office above "The Little Theatre." There was a silence and sweetness about the place that made her feel Winthrop Ames could not exist away from the things he loved.

After stumbling up and down Broadway for a season, there is something gladdening about a quiet by-street and a man who proves that in the theatrical business, one does not have to be uneducated to succeed.

"Another marvelous horror? Miss Kerwin?" He asked the question with his fine head a trifle side-cocked.

"No, sir!" she whispered, leaning across as though she were a little girl confiding in her papa, "A marvelous marvel! The most gorgeous tale ever told in this world and all the fairies in it are real people; just the opposite of realism, earthiness and truth and yet, Mr. Ames, it might all very well be the truth."

His bloodless aquiline face was not immediately responsive. Eve had heard about the sciatica. For a moment inaudible grimaces swept over his countenance then New England graciousness returning he asked: "Why don't you put it on yourself, Miss Kerwin?"

"Oh, Mr. Ames, I'd bungle it. It's your kind of play.

It's for the man who isn't afraid to buy ten thousand dollars' worth of props even if he has to throw them all away. It's for the man who put on "The Children of Earth"—Mr. Ames, it's for the man who knows!"

Wasn't it human of him to sit there and smile at Eve. She could have wept with gratitude.

"Miss Kerwin, you would make a great actress."

"A very bad actress, if you'll excuse me—I've tried it. I couldn't work nightly with imaginary thrills—my thrills have got to be real!"

Mr. Ames has a reputation for seldom expressing his enthusiasm but he cocked his head side-wise again and laughed like a boy. "Well, I'll run through it this evening. Come back tomorrow at this time and if it's what you say it is, we'll startle New York with it sometime during the coming winter."

Eve raced away with a jumpy joy inside her that she hadn't felt for years. In fact, the only other time that she had really felt it was in the dim grayness of the morning she left Port Illington, the fast train rushing on through the daybreak into the mysteries of the years that lay before her.

Some of those years she had lived up. Wasted perhaps as far as personal happiness was concerned but then again, not wasted if she could feel still the young pounding sensation of things straight before her but still to be attained.

She bought a cockey little black velvet tamm and a ruff to match it. She acquired a new blouse and some Japanese wafers for tea, then climbed up on top of a Fifth Avenue bus and joggled away down to the end of the line.

The only reason Mr. Ames did not stay up all night reading "The Breath of God" was because he read more quickly than Eve. His strong artistic conscience was

aroused. His enthusiasm, that so few people ever see, was very near the surface. When Eve arrived at the appointed hour, all the pessimism for which he is famous, lay dozing somewhere in the back-ground.

"Miss Kerwin, a thing like this play is born once in a century. It would be asking too much of the gods to be blessed more often. There is only one thing that bothers me now—the man to do the sets."

Eve sat perfectly silent pressing her hands together till they ached. What could she say? Nervously she sat, hungering for his decisions.

"There is a man over in Paris, an Aubrey Beardsley person by the name of Oisseau. Greater than Bakst I think. He hasn't Bakst's orientalism but then he isn't oriental—he's French. Delicacy, almost a feminine imagination—I've never seen colors like he paints in my life. I didn't know there were such colors."

"I've never heard of him, Mr. Ames, but he seems to be the fairy prince to do this fairy play."

"Yes, he's the man. But to get him to do it. He's so much the vogue in Paris, so beyond reach, he'd never even acknowledge a written request. I wish I were going to Paris myself at this time."

"Can't you send some one, Mr. Ames, it would be worth it." Eve almost jumped from her chair. With determination she gritted her teeth and awaited for his imagination to work.

"Yes, I must send someone, but an ordinary commercial agent won't do—never get any nearer than a letter."

"Mr. Ames," Eve's voice trembled, "would I be a suitable person do you think? Couldn't I do it for you?"

He looked at her quietly and answered: "Yes, you could do it for me."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

The brave sailing of any ship into unknown danger, brings a sob into the most hardened throat. It's the leaving of something anchored and certain for something at loose ends and uncertain. It is the breaking with something that even though it be not quite what your fancy pictures, is nevertheless yours, for something that, even though it seems very pleasant may never be yours.

In the quiet of her cabin with the whistles shrieking overhead and the shout for all visitors to leave the ship, dinning in their ears, Bob crushed Eve tightly in his arms. "Dearest," he whispered, "I'm glad we were married this morning—I am glad, too, that you're getting this great chance—you deserved it—your success is just another guarantee that my judgment in loving you so much is correct but remember every moment of the time that I'm waiting for you to hurry back to me."

She clung to him as she had never clung to anybody in her life. Her hands were passionately carressing his eyes, his lips, his hair. She pressed her face against his and felt their cheeks cling where her tears cemented them together. Again and again she jerked herself out of his arms only to fly back again, breathless for his protection.

Big brave fellow that he was, all the words had gone out of his head. "I'm glad you married me this morning dear," was all that he could find in the great treasure house of beautiful things he had in his heart to say to her.

"It's so hard to go dear," she sobbed, "so hard to go away—I'll come back quickly, dear—I'll come back

quickly—" then the whistles shrieked out angrier than ever and Casey disappeared.

The band was playing something that made Eve weep more. She felt at last the soft rocking of the ship and picking up her little Irish flag that was the mate to one he had in his pocket, she struggled up to the promenade deck and pushed her way through to the railing.

The ship slid out past the cheering mob on the pier. Everybody on board was straining to get one last glimpse of somebody on land. The people on the pier cheered bravely—they were certain about themselves—the people on the ship waved their hands in silence.

Eve struggled to get one last look at her husband but the tears were streaming so fast that all she could do was wave her little Irish flag and pretend to see. Suddenly her vision cleared and there in the back of the dimming mob rose a hand and clutched in it was a bit of green silk.

"Oh—oh—oh!" was all that she could find to say and then again the tears flooded out the beauty of the world.

CHAPTER XL.

Eve felt a stir as she entered the room. It was an American party in Paris. She knew she was striking, with her black hair brushed straight back from her forehead and her high-waisted black gown billowing over silver roses down to her silver slippers.

"It was awfully good of you to let me come, Mrs. Hartman. This is my one day of frivolity,—tomorrow I go to work!" She clasped the hand of her hostess.

Mrs. Hartman was an American who had lived in Paris in the same apartment for thirty years. She always argued that she couldn't move—folks coming back would never be able to find her.

"I'm going to take you around and introduce you myself, Miss Kerwin, and then leave you to your fate."

She piloted Eve to a group of Californians. "Miss Kerwin, may I present Mr. Clifford, Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Kane—all from the Golden West."

They all three grabbed at Eve's hand at the same time and said in chorus: "Ever been to California?"

Everybody in the little group burst into laughter.

"Of all homesick people," confided Mrs. Hartman, "Californians are the most dreadful—whenever you see a bunch of them you may be sure they are discussing Chinamen and fogs."

"Wish I had a chest full of it now," muttered Kane.

"What? Chinamen?" asked Eve.

"No! F-O-G—fog!" He spelled the word with a worshipful tenderness. "Really, Miss Kerwin, ever been to California?"

"No," she answered, whispering diplomatically in his ear, "but I'd like to know all about it!"

"I beg of you, Miss Kerwin, don't start him!" laughed Mrs. Hartman, gently pulling Eve along with her. "He's worse than a man about his first baby—come, meet all the people and then choose your partner. Just you get into the hands of a homesick Californian early in the evening and you might as well decide on what message you want to leave your folks."

Eve floated about with the incredible little old lady and met another group and another and felt with a certain warmth of satisfaction that people were discussing her.

She hoped they all knew that she was a producer of plays. She also very much hoped that they had found out her errand in Paris. She had hinted in undertones that she was frightfully busy. Of course people always asked: "What doing?" and then she told them in an off-hand reticent way, what she was dying for them to know.

All artists pass through three stages: The bluff stage when they haven't done anything but talk a great deal about it; then the foothold, still a bit skiddy, when they talk if urged; then success when it is better business to be modest. There is never, however, a time when they don't want to tell. Eve was passing through the second stage.

It takes a woman to carry on an animated conversation with someone and at the same time hear what is being said about her on the other side of the room. Eve was a woman.

"Produces plays!" she heard Mrs. Hartman explain to a divan full of people and it warmed her all over. Somehow until that moment she had never heard herself announced as a recognized personality.

"If you'll tell me all about yourself, Miss Kerwin,"

Mr. Kane was saying: "I'll tell you all about California."

Eve drew a deep preparatory breath when suddenly a lovely little figure was framed in the huge silken-draped doorway.

Her red lips were parted and there was a warm eagerness in her blue eyes. She might just have stepped down from a pink and white canvas by Watteau. She had that lovingness about her that all women no matter how great they become, long to possess.

Eve would have known that she was a mother if Mr. Kane hadn't whispered: "Little French woman—two of the loveliest new babies you ever saw in your life; twin girls of her very own and two boys that were nobody's. Got an idea that she can only properly thank God for hers by taking in two foundlings of the opposite sex."

And then Mrs. Hartman took the little satin shepherdess by the hand and together they trailed about the room greeting old friends and meeting new ones.

"Miss Kerwin," and Mrs. Hartman took Eve's hand in her left and Madame Oisseau's in her right and joining the two women said: "This is Madame Oisseau, you must know each other."

"Eve glowed all over: 'I'm just delighted! Really Madame Oisseau, are you the wife of *THE* Oisseau?'"

"I am wife of ver' dear man; *ze* Oisseau to me and I am proud I can say, *ze* Oisseau to all world but for different reason."

"I see," said Eve, "you'd love him even if he didn't make the most fantastic scenery in all the world?"

"Would love him if he do nothing but be by Monsieur Oisseau."

"That's heavenly—I mean loving like that but this really is vitally interesting. I came all the way to Paris

to beg your Monsieur Oisseau to design the scenery for a new play I am helping to put on back in America."

"*You* help to put on play? Then you have none of babies?" The little woman pressed Eve's hand sympathetically.

"No; I haven't any babies but some day I hope to have. Putting on plays won't keep me from having babies, will it?"

"Oh, yes—you would not want to make plays—I think perhaps you make *ze* play because you will like to make *ze* baby."

"Oh, no, really, I could do both—and I hope to do them both well. You see, Americans must have professions, too."

"And *zis* is not professions—making baby?" there was not the slightest tinge of vehemence in Madame Oisseau's voice, only innocent inquiry.

"Well, of course, having babies is the noblest profession—but really it's no longer enough." Eve accepted a salad from a colored servant and asked Madame Oisseau to share the divan with her and Mr. Kane who had fallen into a fit of melancholy because nobody was talking about California.

"Is Monsieur coming tonight?" asked Eve, hoping to fall into his good graces by first capturing his little wife.

"Oh, no, he is out in *ze* land—what you say, country. You see, sky he paint in studio, my husband say is no sky, no color, no nothing. He paint each sky from God's model, *zen* he catch him always different. God make his model lovely and free."

"But he will come back soon?" asked Eve.

"Oh, yes, he is only at St. Cloud—he is come back to-morrow midday. You come first to my house, we shall

make surprise. Oh, he like ver' much pleasant surprise. I will show you four baby. He will be more please when you admire baby as when you admire sky. He say baby is greatest work of art and we must have baker's dozen!"

In the morning there wasn't any sunshine; there wasn't any rain; just a foggy indecision of atmosphere that threw Paris into the sulks.

"Just like life," Eve whispered into her satin muff as she hurried along toward the river: "Nobody ever sees very far ahead and that's what makes us so brave." The next moment she forgot what she was saying and bought a bag of hot chestnuts from a street-vender.

It was heavenly to be in Paris; to look into the lighted shop-windows; to bump into strange figures in the fog; to stand on the quay and watch the slender boats dart up out of the dimness and disappear like porpoises into the ocean grayness again.

At last the sun grew braver. One by one candles and lamps blinked out. The world popped up clear and work-a-day with nothing of mystery left.

Eve lifted the brass knocker on Monsieur's door. The little starched maid, looking exactly as though she had stepped from a comic opera chorus, took Eve's wraps and offered her a glorious room in which to wait.

Heavy chenille carpets silenced her steps as she strode from point to point examining the wonders that hung everywhere. Paintings, prints, old brackets, miniatures, silhouettes, all resting harmoniously against the Prussian blue velvet walls.

It was the home of a lover of possessions. The aesthete who must joy over his treasures everyday, almost every hour of every day.

There flew to her mind a sudden unconscious compari-

son between this room and Bob Casey's studio in Washington Square. This the producer's house, filled to crowding with things he could not exist without. Bobbo's studio, the collector's home, almost bare so that he might show to the best advantage, objects that were eternally struggling for supremacy over each other.

In Oisseau's house there was no struggle. Each treasure hung or stood close to its neighbor in a co-operative fashion for the good of all. The whole place was peace and harmony and luxurious love.

From somewhere in the house came the twittering and rustling of babies, and over it all the sweet voice of the mother bird, chirping gayly as she preened their feathers for presentation to the world.

In that first hideous moment when the crooning procession advanced toward her, Eve prayed for the power to conceal the terror in her soul. The terror that shot from her eyes and beat back again, hot and piercing from Stanley.

CHAPTER XLI.

His golden hair was brushed back from his forehead, and a small mustache and imperial gave his face a courtly slimness.

There was a new lift to his head; a new strength and straightness to his back-bone; a new power in his eyes.

"Zis is my husband, Miss Kerwin, and zose our family," said the little woman and the joyous tone in which she sang "husband" and "family" and the little trail of rippling laughter that followed, gave Eve an added moment in which to struggle against utter collapse.

Stanley took Eve's hand and instantly the demand that shot from his eyes, was answered by a promise from hers.

He spoke first. "This is a very great surprise—I did not know that we had a visitor. My little woman is always surprising me with something lovely." He dropped Eve's hand and took one of the girl babies from his wife's arms.

"Kiss the beautiful American lady, Jaqueline," he coaxed, pressing the infant's soft face against Eve's cheek. Eve held out her quivering arms and Stanley laid his baby in them. She held the little bundle very close to her heart.

"Zey are ver' friendly, our little girls, are zey not, Miss Kerwin, and our little boys zey are friendly, too."

Stanley held one of the little boys up to Eve and he opened his tiny pink mouth and touched her straight on the lips.

Eve knew that she must say something. Her body trembled, her brain ached and her lips were cold and stiff. She

mumbled she knew not what and then with a desperate effort sank into a chair saying: "Patty cake, patty cake, a baker's man."

It wasn't very inventive and the baby was entirely too young to understand what she meant but it was a God-given means of gaining time.

What bitter tragedies may be bridged if only there is a baby in the room.

At last Eve's tongue loosened. She laughed a little and the baby smiled and feeling suddenly alive again she chattered: "These are the very loveliest babies in all the world. Madame Oisseau, you must be a sort of universal mother to take in the little strangers with all you have to do for your daughters. Monsieur, did you get your sky? Was it foggy in the country? Did you go far? I was so afraid you wouldn't see me that I paved a positive success through your wife."

Of course, Eve knew that she was rattling on like a mad woman but Madame Oisseau probably thought that all American ladies rattled on. Eve wanted Stanley to know that she was making the most valient effort of her life time.

Came another hideous silence, then Stanley told his wife to take the babies away. Eve clung to them: "Oh, don't—I love babies, they really don't bother me at all—I want them!"

"Oh, ver' well, Miss Kerwin, but you know we French peoples show our baby, zen put him back in ze nursery. It is different in America, my husband tell me ze baby put ze parent back in ze nursery!" The little woman came close to her husband and looked up with a worshipful smile.

All that Eve longed for at that moment was a million years in which to look and look at the changes in Stanley;

she didn't at all want to make conversation with the loving doll under his arm.

About Stanley was an aura of power and defiance. He had a new way of snapping his teeth together suddenly as though he were going to push through a mob and probably kill forty or fifty on the way. He was the huge male animal standing there beside his timid female. The bat of his eyelash was her law and she looked up into his face as though to obey that law was the thing for which the divine God had created her.

"Shall you remain long in Paris, Miss Kerwin?" asked Stanley.

It was the very question that she had seen wavering in his eyes; the very question she knew she must answer before they could proceed on friendly terms.

"Only long enough to get you to sign a contract with Winthrop Ames, Monsieur Oiseau."

"Me!" he gasped, and she thought she detected a certain bending of his spine—a certain drooping of his shoulders.

"You!" she gasped back, laughing as she gasped and thankful in her soul to be able to burrow through the strain to a joking imitation of his surprise. "You!" she repeated, "aren't you the greatest designer in Paris? Hasn't Mr. Ames sent me all the way over just to get a personal promise from you? You *will* design the sets for Mr. Ames, won't you?"

"Why, yes, certainly, it's a great honor, but aren't you exaggerating a bit? Of course, I know my position and I know what I can do and furthermore, I know what I am going to do in the future and that's something that will startle even Mr. Ames!"

Eve saw that Stanley was losing his temper with her

and quite in the old-fashioned way. The fear that Madame Oisseau might get a glimmer of what was going on in his mind, brought her abruptly to her feet.

"I must look at the babies a moment longer and then perhaps we had better go to your studio and talk business, Monsieur Oisseau."

CHAPTER XLII.

All the way across the little park that separated the studio from the home, Eve and Stanley walked in silence. There was an animal defiance in him as he threw his shoulders back. There was a crying weariness in her that crept down into her dragging feet.

Suddenly they stopped at the entrance of the sky-lighted building and their eyes met. She knew that passionate look in his. The answering thrill was written broad across her own face.

He turned from her, unlocked the door and flung it open. She thought he meant to lead the way and their bodies collided.

Eve's finger-tips flew to her eyes and she pressed hard on the closed lids as though to shut out the sight of him and his wife and their babies and the whole uncontrollable scheme of things forever.

Utterly unable to move from the spot she leaned against the door-jamb—all her defiance gone, all her power.

There were no tears in Stanley's eyes. His head was erect, his shoulders stiff. He put his arms about her and lifted rather than guided her up the three flights of narrow stairs.

In the studio he sank into a low chair and covered his face with his hands.

Through and through Eve's being, surged all the old agony—every drop of blood in her body cried for his love. She stood before him sobbing: "Oh Stanley, why couldn't you and I have gone on like this—why couldn't you have

succeeded with me, dear—what is there in this woman that I haven't got—tell me Stanley! Tell me!"

His lips trembled and his voice came unsteadily, "She believes in me. She's the first person that ever did. She hasn't any brains—just love. If I explain an idea, she doesn't understand what I mean but she listens like a little mouse and when I'm through she tells me she loves me. She loves what I do because I do it. She kisses each finger every morning before I go to work and tells them to make beautiful pictures. And I love her for it. Oh, Eve, we have been so happy. So sensibly happy. So full of pleasures and successes. I worship her for bringing out the best in me. Sometimes I wonder if she hasn't more sense than all the women in the whole world put together. I wonder if she hasn't too much sense to show me she has any. She's always tactful, always loving, always incredibly where I want her. We had a dreadful time at first. I was working at St. Cloud," he laughed bitterly, "starving at St. Cloud, when she found me and took me home to her old mother. They were very poor but they fed me and let me sleep in their shop among the coal oil cans, and ropes and candles and firewood at night, and in the day time I worked out of doors. Always struggling with the old ideas. I never lost faith in the big things, it was only the little ones that drove me mad. The first real canvas was born at St. Cloud and the others came quick like a flood through the broken place in a dam. I brought them to town. I sold them and got orders for more and more and more. It was like a colossal dream—I sprang into life in one short month. I'm made, Eve. I'm a great man. You know now that I'm a great man if Winthrop Ames would send you all the way to Paris to buy me!"

"Do you know what I've been doing?" she asked, and

suddenly he darted from his chair and strode up and down the room kicking at the floor as though he would destroy it utterly. "Do I know?" he sneered, "I've watched every step. God, how I hate that ambition in you—it kills absolutely every fibre of energy I've got! You understand too damn well! A man with ideas would waste 'em on you—talk 'em out! Live with a woman like I've married and you can't make her understand an idea; I've got to paint it out in colors and then she thinks it's great only because I've done it." He stopped in front of her and shook his fist in her face: "I'm a great man—great! Do you understand?" He began to pace again. "Nobody over here knows who I am. Nobody knew I had a wife in America when I married here. It was a reckless thing to do but I knew you'd divorce me sooner or later and I wanted to have her by me all the time. I couldn't wait. I took the big chance and depended on your decency to keep still if you ever found out. And the name," he laughed good naturedly at last, "I took the name Oiseau, swallow, I think it means, because I couldn't think of the French for sparrow. You always liked the little bird in the right-hand corner of my stuff so I named myself some kind of a bird in French, the only thing I could remember—it was a case of emergency. I decided to lose my old self quite suddenly one day and I've stayed lost ever since."

He took Eve's two hands gently and smoothed them up and down in the old way that used to quiet her nerves.

Wild things were beating her brain into madness. If he would only take her in his arms. If he would only come back to her she would learn all the things the other woman knew. She would be careful. She would kiss

his finger-tips each morning. She would love him and love him and love him!

"Eve," he whispered, "now that I'm great, if I had you back I'd not only be great, I'd be the greatest man in the world! I want our long talks together. In the old days I never had you for a minute. You treated me like a child. I want you entirely. I want your body and your heart and your soul—I want you!"

He placed his two hot hands on her shoulders. She could feel her heart throb against her throat. What if he should hold her close to him! Her resistance was ebbing!

He laughed hysterically. "A great idea has just occurred to me, Eve—a really funny idea. I've had my success. I've shown the world what I can do—my ego is satisfied. After all that's the principal joy of success—showing somebody! Putting it over the dubs back in our home town that said we were crazy! What if I should refuse to work any longer? Suppose I should decide that you and I will go away together and be happy tramps and play and play and play forever until the very end of life?"

He slumped suddenly into a chair again. His fine blonde hair was mussed and untidy. Even the exquisitely tailored coat that had seemed so perfect upon his arrival a few moments before, rode high over his collar as though it had not been made for him. There crept over his body the old lazy look as he crossed his legs and sank into the middle of his spine.

"Eve, come over here and sit down, I want to talk to you. I've been the goll derndest fool the way I've worked since I left America. I just did it to spite you—you devil! the way you deserted me!"

His tie had pulled loose and lumpy and there was a crumpled look about the edge of his cuffs.

Just then the brass knocker pounded against the panels of the down stairs door. "My model," said Stanley, "let her wait!"

Eve drew a quick breath: "Let her come up, Stanley, dear—let her come up!"

Stanley caught both of Eve's hands and mashed them brutally in his: "Will you come back tonight—if I let her come up now?"

"Yes—I'll come back tonight!"

CHAPTER XLIII.

It was very dark. All the way as Eve hurried toward Stanley's studio, she was a thing not of brain but of flaming emotion. She couldn't think—she didn't want to think! She wanted to feel!

Everything that she had labored so hard to build up, was slipping away from her. She didn't care if the whole world came to an end in another day so long as it gave her back in those last few hours the love that she suffered for, the love that she must have!

What was success? What was fame? What was honor that made a slave of her, so long as her body could ache and tremble and thrill like it was aching and trembling and thrilling now!

What were scruples in the face of passion? Nothing! Nothing—if the passion was only big enough!

And then as though some violent poison were taking effect, her face and throat were contorted with pain. A man came toward her from the opposite direction. It was Stanley. She was lost! Now she could never turn back. Against the wall she leaned, shuddering.

The man came abreast of her and passed on—it was not Stanley.

Without warning, dead Marj and The Shepherd and the old heart-breaking life in the Tenements rushed back across her brain like a destructive cyclone.

That would be what she would have to live through again if she went away with Stanley! He wouldn't work if he lived with her! He had said so! He would save all his energy for torturing and criticising her. She would

ruin him again. She would ruin herself! She would smash Bob's glorious world into muddy bits. That wasn't what she wanted of life! That would be nothing short of a spiteful insanity. What she wanted of life was work and babies and peace! What she wanted of life was the big constructive thing, the big love—the love that knew nothing of hate and anger and heart-breaking adjustments. What she wanted of life was Bob!

She drew herself together and stumbled away, far away from the little street into the thickening traffic of a crowded thoroughfare.

CHAPTER XLIV.

A block away from the studio in the other direction a crowd had gathered about a tall blonde man who was standing perfectly still, his finger-tips pressed into his forehead, his eyes staring into strange distances.

Stanley was pressing his finger-tips into his forehead in order to make things clearer. Only one block away was the studio and Eve and destruction. Did he want to go through that again? Did he love Eve or was it just a frenzy of hatred that he felt for her and all her tribe. Wasn't it just the fact that no man could ever get even with a brain like Eve's? Wasn't it true that all he really wanted of her was another chance to get even? Was that all his little wife and his cherub babies had taught him of life?

Suddenly aware of the crowd he was gathering about him, he dropped his fingers from his forehead, smiled contentedly as though all the problems of the world were settled forever, and lifting his fine blonde head, hurried back in the direction of home.







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